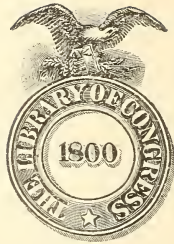


COMMENTARY  
ON THE  
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES



McLAUGHLIN



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# Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles

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BY

Rev. G. A. McLaughlin, D. D.

AUTHOR OF COMMENTARIES ON THE FOUR GOSPELS, "A LIVING  
SACRIFICE," "INBRED SINS," "A CLEAN HEART," "OLD  
WINE IN NEW BOTTLES," "SAVED AND KEPT,"  
"THE VINE AND BRANCHES," "THE  
PROMISED GIFT," ETC.



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## Preface

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An eminent ecclesiastical authority\* has said concerning Holiness as found in the Word of God, "It breathes in the prophecy, thunders in the law, murmurs in the narrative, whispers in the promises, supplicates in the prayers, sparkles in the poetry, resounds in the songs, speaks in the types, glows in the imagery, voices in the language and burns in the spirit of the whole scheme, from its Alpha to Omega, from its beginning to its end. Holiness! Holiness needed! Holiness required! Holiness offered! Holiness attainable! Holiness a present duty, a present privilege, a present enjoyment, is the progress and completeness of its wondrous theme! It is the truth glowing all over, webbing all through revelation; the glorious truth which sparkles and whispers and sings and shouts in all its history and biography and poetry and prophecy and precept and promise and prayer; the great central truth of the system. The wonder is, that all do not see, that any rise up to question a truth so conspicuous, so glorious, so full of comfort." Another authority† has written a book to show that Holiness is "the central idea of Christianity." This fact, however, is not generally recognized or admitted among the commentators. Holiness seems to many to be a matter of incidental mention in the Scriptures, and many commentators succeed very well in concealing it, or in those marked passages that teach it, treat it so indefinitely as to make it intangible and misty. Hence this commentary, which attempts to reveal Holiness (either in theory or practice) in every verse, claims the right of existence. Most of the early commentaries were written from a Calvinistic standpoint, which denied the possibility of living free, either from original sin or actual transgression; asserting that Christ cannot or will

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\*Bishop Foster.

†Bishop Peck.

not cleanse and keep from sin, but that this friendly work must be performed by our enemy, Death; or, if some have admitted that Christ can perform the work, they have denied that the Great Physician could or would cure until we were removed from the baneful atmosphere of this sinful world.

Arminian commentators have been affected, 'with but few exceptions, with this unscriptural, dogmatic taint. As we study both Calvinistic and Arminian authorities, we many times notice passages where, to be true to the Scripture, they unconsciously drop their theology, and clearly and explicitly declare the possibility of being cleansed from all sin. If any reader shall say, as we quote from these authorities, that we do not represent their thoughts as they themselves intended, we reply, that we represent at least Adam Clarke, John Wesley and some others correctly, and that other writers were obliged to state their opinions as they did or be unfaithful to Scripture, and we quote some of them to show the inconsistency of any system that represents Jesus Christ as a perfect Saviour, and at the same time theoretically denies his power to heal the malady of sin, at the very time of the sickness. In the treatment of the miracles of Christ, commentators have been obliged to consider the healing of the body as a type of the healing of the soul, or get no spiritual lessons from these events. But in so doing, complete, instantaneous faith-cures of the body have been represented as symbols of the same cures wrought upon the souls of men. It is impossible to find a commentator who seeks to convey spiritual teaching from the cure of lepers, who does not state the anti-type of soul-healing as clearly and unequivocally as we could wish. We call especial attention to the treatment of the healing of leprosy by nearly all the commentators, who state clearly and positively that Jesus can cleanse from the leprosy of sin. As leprosy is universally accepted as a type of sin, its cure must therefore be accepted as a type of the cure of sin. A large part of the cures of Christ must have a spiritual interpretation, or none at all that shall be of any spiritual profit to us. Happily we are not left in doubt as to this question. Jesus interpreted to us many of his miracles, and thus gave us the principle of interpreting miracles spiritually. (See John 6:27-64; 9:39-41; Luke 5:1-10.) Our view of the great and underlying thought of the



Scriptures is further substantiated by all or nearly all those grand passages which tell us the end and aim of the Bible. (See Psalms 119:1-4, 9, 11; John 15:3; 17: 17; Eph. 5:26; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:4, and others.)

It may be objected that the author sees Holiness every where in the Scriptures because he is determined to see it there. In reply we would say that doubtless the objector may not see it there, because he does *not* wish to see it. The scribes and Pharisees, who were certainly as well acquainted with the text of the Old Testament as any of the modern divines or scholars, did not recognize the portraits of Jesus of Nazareth in those writings at all. We would say still further that the great proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures is in the power and privilege of proving them true by experience, if we come candidly to Jesus seeking to know and do his will. The doctrines of the new birth and the witness of the Spirit, as taught in the Scriptures, have been proved true again and again in human lives. And the testimonies to this effect are accepted in the Church today. The doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, a work subsequent to conversion, whereby the heart is cleansed from all sin, is just as clearly testified to by the saints from all the denominations, men and women of sober judgment, scholarly wisdom and consistent lives.

Lastly. This commentary is not written polemically, or with any desire to reflect on anybody or anything but sin. It is written to assist that large and growing body of believers whose understanding, through experience of these truths, has been opened to see these things; who have found, since their baptism of love, that the Bible is a new book; who have the *new Revised Version* by the latest and best of the revisers—the Holy Spirit.

### CONCERNING THE BOOK OF ACTS.

The Acts of the Apostles is the sequel to the four gospels. Without it the story of salvation would not be complete. Jesus lived such a wonderful life, spoke such wonderful words, died such a tragic death, and arose so marvellously from the grave, that we naturally would like to know more, as to the results of his kingdom on earth. The foundations of his kingdom were laid

under such unfavorable conditions; his death by crucifixion naturally brought so much contumely and disgrace to his cause, that we naturally desire to know whether, and how, his kingdom would go on. Would its progress be arrested? Would men be willing to follow the standard of the shameful cross? We naturally would look to see the results of his life and atonement upon the world.

The four gospels show how his kingdom began. The Book of Acts shows how it was carried on. In the gospels he is acting in bodily manifestation. In the Book of Acts he is still acting, but through his church.

Luke in his gospel tells us of Jesus' promising the Holy Ghost to his disciples. (Luke 11:13.) In the Book of Acts, Luke (who is the author) tells how, when and where, the Holy Ghost was poured upon these disciples and the results. We might call Luke's gospel, the record of disciples in the experience of the first blessing—regeneration, Luke's second book, the Book of Acts, the record of the experience of the disciples enjoying "the second blessing."

This narrative by Luke tells how entirely sanctified preachers spread the gospel so marvellously, during the next third of a century after the death of Jesus, until it went all over the known world. It is the model book for the study of an earnest ministry.

The greater part of the book is given to the labors and experience of St. Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles. It shows what God can do with a really consecrated man.

## CHAPTER I.

### BRIDGING OVER TWO DISPENSATIONS.

The Relation of the Dispensation of The Son to That of the Spirit of Holiness. Vs. 1-5. Carnal Notions Corrected. Vs. 6-11. Waiting for the Spirit of Holiness. Vs. 12-14. Filling Up the Number of Apostles. Vs. 15-26.

#### THE RELATION OF THE DISPENSATION OF THE SON TO THAT OF THE SPIRIT OF HOLINESS. Vs. 1-5.

1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen :

3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God :

4 And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me.

5 For John truly baptized with water ; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

There are three great dispensations—the Dispensation of the Father, closing with the death of John the Baptist, the last prophet of that dispensation and the Dispensation of the Son—Jesus Christ, commencing at the death of John the Baptist (This was a short dispensation of about three years, but centuries were crowded into it), and the Dispensation of the Spirit of Holiness. The latter is also called the Gentile Dispensation because its truths are more specifically directed to the Gentiles, as God's chosen people, the Jews, had rejected him and he had rejected them. The work of the first and second dispensations was directed to the Hebrew nation, with a few Gentile proselytes. The work

of the Third Dispensation is directed to the Gentiles with but a few Hebrew proselytes so far.

We have purposely entitled this section "*The relation of the Dispensation of the Son to that of The Spirit of Holiness,*" for two reasons. 1. This is one of the names given the Third Person of the Trinity. (See Rom. 1:4.) We get so accustomed to the term, Holy Spirit, that we fail to take in its significance. The Holy Spirit is so called not because the other persons of the Trinity are not holy, but because it is his work to make men holy. He is "the executive of the God-head" for the work of holiness. Hence Paul calls him "The Spirit of holiness." 2. This commentary professes to be written to show that the Bible is full of holiness. Consequently, we use this term here.

We believe St. Luke was the author of the Book of Acts (See our introduction). The former treatise to which he refers is the Gospel according to St. Luke as that is also dedicated to the same person, Theophilus. (See our Commentary on St. Luke, Chap. 1:1-4.) The word, Theophilus means Lover of God. Hence, some have thought this was not a real person but the book was dedicated to all lovers of God in general. But it seems to us that Theophilus was a real person. In the Gospel of St. Luke he calls him "most excellent."

St. Luke was a layman writing to laymen—Theophilus—hence the Roman Catholic assertion that the Bible was written only to be read by priests falls to the ground as a palpable error. St. Luke was an educated man. He writes, both his Gospel and the Book of Acts, in an elegant literary style.

In the former treatise (The Gospel of Acts) he gives the most systematic account of the life of Jesus that we have. He gave an account of "all that Jesus *began* to do and teach." In the Book of Acts he gives an account of what Jesus *continued* to do through his church. The Book of Acts may be called "The Acts of Jesus-Through His Church." Jesus had said, "Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:20.) Some have called it "The Acts of the Holy Ghost." So he gives the life of Jesus up to his ascension, as we may see by consulting Luke 24:50-51. In verses 2-9 he gives some additional facts not recorded in Luke 24:50-53. It will be well for students of this

passage to compare these two passages. Luke here tells us that Jesus, on the day in which he was taken up, gave commandments to the disciples. He refers doubtless to the commandments given in his talks with the disciples recorded in Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:14-18; Luke 24:46-49; John 20:21-23, and John 21:15-17.

Jesus had shown himself alive to them nine different times after his resurrection (See John 20:11-18; I Cor. 15:5; Mark 16:12, 13; Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-23; John 20:24-29; John 21:1-24; Matt. 28:16-17; Matt. 28:18-19, and Acts 1:3-12). These occurrences fully established the truth of the resurrection of Jesus, and also the religion of Jesus. For the resurrection of Jesus is the great proof of the truth of Christianity.

These occurrences all took place within forty days. And this being true, we know that the disciples tarried in prayer about ten days, for the promised gift of the Spirit of Holiness, because Pentecost was fifty days after the Passover, at which time Jesus was crucified. To be a little more exact, the time of waiting is less than ten days, for we must take account of the fact of the three days that Jesus laid in the tomb. Strictly speaking then, the disciples prayed about seven days before Pentecost in the upper room. During these forty days he was busy explaining to them more fully concerning the kingdom of God. He had taught them much elementary truth concerning the kingdom during his ministry by parables. He probably now taught higher branches of the kingdom. We now have the account of his last interview with them. This account also is given in Mark 16:19 and Luke 24:50-53.

Jesus told these disciples that they must not depart from Jerusalem until they had received "The promise of the Father." What was *the promise of the Father*? Did he make only one promise? or was there a promise that overtopped the others to such an extent that it was called "*the promise of the Father*"? There were two great promises under the Old Dispensation—the gift of the Son of God and the gift of the Holy Spirit. These were the two great promises of the Old Testament that included everything else of blessing. The first "promise of the Father"—had already been given in the life, teachings, sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ. "The promise of the Father" which had not yet been fulfilled was the Holy Spirit as the birth right of all believers.

This promise is found in Isaiah 44:3; Ezekiel 36:27, and Joel 2:28-32, and also by John the Baptist, the last of the Old Testament prophets. (Matt. 3:11.) Under the Old Testament Dispensation, the Holy Spirit had come upon a few who were filled with the Spirit for special duty as kings, priests and prophets. But now he was to come upon all believers who should seek him.

Jesus told them that they had heard of this promise from himself. He had been talking to them about the Spirit (See Luke 11:13; John 7:39; Chapters 14-16), all through his ministry, but the promise made by the Father had not yet been fulfilled.

They were to wait for its fulfillment. It was no use for them to start out to take the world and build the kingdom of God until they had received the fullness of the Spirit. And we can see no use for preachers today to try to build the spiritual kingdom—the real kingdom of God without the same equipment. Since this is what God provided for all (chapter 2:17) no man has a right to preach the Gospel without it. Education, culture and human wisdom (proper in their place) are no substitute for it. "Wait!" We can almost hear impetuous Peter say, "There is so much to do; so many dying in sin; had we not better get at the proclamation of the truth at once?" No, there is such a thing as too much haste and there is a waiting that is no delay. The workman needs his tools; the soldier needs his equipment, and any going forth until these are furnished is time thrown away. The way to gain time and make it count is to wait for the promise of the Father.

Then let us notice who these men were. They were the only followers he had to leave behind him. Strange infatuation of some who, to maintain a theory, assert that these were unregenerate men. Jesus had already said to his Father that he had kept them and none of them was lost, (John 17:12) and he had given them power to cast out devils, and devils were subject to them. It is a sin then to say that they were unsaved. If Jesus insisted that Nicodemus should be born again before Pentecost, he certainly could not be satisfied to have his chosen disciples unregenerate. If Nicodemus could be born again before Pentecost then those disciples surely could. To say that Jesus was with them three years and could not leave a single convert behind him is a ridiculous

conclusion. *We cannot believe that this outpouring of the Holy Spirit was upon unrenewed sinners, because the Bible nowhere asks unrenewed sinners to seek such an experience.* These men had already come into intimate experience and acquaintance with the Holy Spirit, such as sinners could not enter. (See John 14:17 and John 20:22.) But they had not yet received him in his fullness.

John the Baptist had preached the two baptisms—one by himself with water and one by Jesus with the Holy Spirit, and now Jesus himself preaches the two. So we have these two great preachers declaring the two experiences. Let us note what the baptism of John signified, prefacing our inquiry with this statement that whatever was received in the preaching of John (whether regeneration or not) these disciples had it, for they were converts and disciples of John when Jesus called them to be his disciples. Let us note then (1) Baptism means cleansing. That is the meaning of the word, and the use of water in baptism symbolizes cleansing. Baptism signifies the cleansing of the one baptized. We are prepared to show that it symbolized that the baptized person was cleansed from all his sins, so that he no longer committed sin. He led a clean life. (2) The baptism of John meant that whosoever was baptized by John had embraced the faith and doctrine that John preached. (3) The doctrines that John preached; (a) Repentance (Mark 1:4). (b) Confession of sin (Mark 1:5). (c) Faith in Jesus (John 3:36; Acts 19:4). (d) Regeneration or eternal life (John 3:36). (e) The knowledge of salvation (Luke 1:77). These are the experiences that are comprised in the complex word, Conversion, and there is nothing more radical comprised in the preaching of conversion today. These disciples had been the disciples of John. This is where and when they were converted; and thus Jesus called not sinners, but converted men to be his first preachers, and Jesus now calls them to their second baptism—the baptism with the Holy Ghost. Sinners are nowhere in the Bible called to receive the Holy Ghost. For these various reasons these men were not sinners.

The Baptism and filling of the Spirit are not exactly the same, for baptism means cleansing, and filling is another entirely different thing. But it is impossible to fill a heart in which there is sin.

Hence, it must be cleansed or it cannot be filled. As these disciples are told that they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence, we must conclude that the filling that took place a few days later, and the baptism also took place at the same time.

The reader must not fail to note the first word of verse 5. It is "*For.*" It is used as causal, having almost the same meaning as *because*. Jesus states the reason why he speaks of the baptism with the Holy Ghost, because John baptized with water, which did not complete salvation, and because John began the work of salvation, it must be completed by adding the baptism with the Holy Ghost. It is an important truth that what God begins he will finish. He who begins a good work in us in regeneration will complete it if we will allow it. It is not compulsory—against our will. But he has made plans to entirely sanctify every regenerate soul. Note then the two baptizers—Jesus and John. Notice the two baptisms—one by water, denoting a clean external life, the other by the Holy Ghost, making a clean inward life.

#### CARNAL NOTIONS CORRECTED. Vs. 6-11.

6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

How hard it has always been to get men to grasp spiritual truths. Jesus had been with them three years and had tried to have them see that he had come to set up a spiritual kingdom. They still thought he was to set up the same old Jewish temporal kingdom. And they did not see how, having been rejected and



crucified by the Jews, he could set it up at this time. It looked incredible. There is a class of church members today who, on account of indwelling sin, are unable to grasp the spiritual nature of religion. To them it is outward performance and ceremony and not an inward spiritual life.

Jesus replies to their request, "It is not for you to know the times and seasons." Abbott says, "The *times* are the succession of ages, greater or less in length, over which the history of the church should extend, before the end comes; the seasons are the successive phases of development, through and by means of which it should grow to its development." This is a rebuke to those who set the time of Christ's second advent, for God the Father has put that in his own power alone.

He tells them that they should receive power when the Spirit of Holiness came upon them. There are many vague and misty notions as to what that power was. Some claim it was power to work miracles. But this cannot be true, for they had already been working miracles; and as far as we know they worked more miracles in healing the sick, casting out devils, etc., before Pentecost than after.

Some have thought this power was a sort of spiritual electricity with which we are surcharged like a storage battery, or like water stored up in a reservoir.

But these are mistaken notions. The power they received at Pentecost was the power to be efficient witnesses, for the next clause adds "and ye shall be witnesses unto me." By receiving the Spirit of Holiness, they were fully qualified to testify, and no witness is fully qualified to testify for Jesus until he receives the Holy Ghost. When the government administers the oath to witnesses it clothes them with authority. In like manner God clothes his witnesses with authority when they receive the baptism with the Spirit of Holiness, and such testimony makes impressions on men and forces them to some kind of a decision. This power received at Pentecost is two fold. 1. It is the power of a holy life. The great blessing and power of Pentecost was purification of heart. This may be seen by the study of Acts 15:9, which tells us that the disciples at this time were purified in heart, for Peter says so. The greatest power in the world is that of a holy life.

It was the pure life of the early church that gave them such power among men. They lived every day as if Christ was coming. This is superior to all eloquence or talent. 2. The Holy Ghost accompanies the testimony of such people and works in men's hearts as they hear it. A holy life back of a witnessing tongue is the great power that accompanies the baptism with the Holy Ghost. Their testimony in a few generations shook and took the known world.

Notice the order of the progress of the Gospel in verse 8. "Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth." This was exactly the case. So much so that this has been called "The Table of Contents of the Book of Acts." The Gospel was witnessed to by them first in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and the account of this is given in chapters 1 to 8. In chapter 8, we have the account of the testimony in Samaria. And the rest of Acts tells how it was testified to the uttermost part of the world of that day, and it is still going on in all the world.

Verse 8 contains the last recorded words of Jesus. Last words of departed friends are always precious. And if we love them we seek to carry out their last wishes. Before Jesus went to Gethsemane and the cross, he prayed that these men might be sanctified and now he speaks on the subject as he is about to step aboard the cloudy chariot. Certainly this fact ought to impress us with the importance of this great subject and if we love Jesus we will be intensely interested in it. How can any one think they love Jesus and fight this great blessing? We delight to think that his last best thought for us was holiness.

His earthly ministry was ended with the promise of the baptism with the Spirit of Holiness, and a chariot of cloud received him out of their sight. Some think it was a cloud of angels. Others think it was the Shechinah, which overshadowed the tabernacle and temple. He will come again some day in a cloud. (See Rev. 1:7, 14:14.) Mark says, "He was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God." Abbott says of the ascension: "It is an almost necessary sequel of the resurrection, since after the resurrection Christ must have either have ascended into heaven or lived a hidden life, and subsequently died a natural death." He carried his glorified resurrected body to

heaven and is there the representative of our humanity, to intercede as the Great High Priest for us.

They stood gazing up into vacancy, there stood two men in white apparel—rather angels in the form of men. They had seen angels at the sepulchre on the morn of the resurrection. Angels announced the fact of the resurrection so there need be no mistake, and now they announce the fact that he had gone into heaven. There is a place called heaven somewhere, as we see by this announcement. And there the man Jesus is, waiting to appear to the world the second time. His second advent will not be like the first, lowly and obscure, but with power and glory.

There are those who attempt to make his second coming only a spiritual coming. But this announcement teaches that it will be *in like manner as his ascension*—personal, literal and visible, accompanied by his holy angels. The angels asked them why they stood gazing up into heaven. Their business now was to be getting ready for the Comforter—the Spirit of Holiness. The angels, no doubt, asked them this question to recall them to their great business for the next ten days—waiting for the Holy Spirit. Our great business until he comes again is not star-gazing nor setting the time, but it is to be sure we get the baptism with the Spirit of Holiness and make a business of urging others to get it. This is the true way of looking for Jesus and heeding his last words. The true adventist is not the one simply championing the doctrine without the experience of holiness, but he who is possessed of that “holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.”

#### WAITING FOR THE SPIRIT OF HOLINESS. Vs. 12-14.

12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.

13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James *the son of Alphæus* and Simon Zelotes and Judas *the brother of James*.

14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

So they returned to Jerusalem, which was a Sabbath day's journey distant—2,000 cubits, about a mile, and went into an

upper room, where the eleven apostles were lodging. We say lodging, because Peter had a house of his own (Mark 1:27). It was the custom of the Jews to retire to the upper room of a house to pray. It may have been the very upper room where Jesus celebrated the passover with them.

They had nothing else on hand but to pray for the Holy Spirit, for Jesus had told them to wait until they received the Spirit.

“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.” It is important to know just how they prayed, for if we know that, we may know how to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit through prayer. 1. They persevered. The word “continued” literally means persevered steadfastly. There is much prayer for the Holy Ghost that is spasmodic and does not go clear through. 2. They were united in their hearts. The Greek word rendered “*one accord*” means “unity in *fervor*” or “*zeal*.” It was more than a modern “Union meeting.” It was more than unity of the lips, or harmony in doctrine. It was unity of fervor and desire of heart for the blessing.

Let us notice who they were, because some people have thought they were of a sublime nature, being apostles, and did not have to contend with the same fallen nature as we do. But they had the same carnal nature that people have today. There was Peter who had denied Jesus, but had been restored at the Sea of Galilee (John 21:15-23) and had been commissioned to feed the flock of God. There were James and John, who had exhibited unholy ambition in seeking place and pre-eminence in his kingdom. The whole of them had shown their weakness of faith in the storm on Galilee and on many other occasions. Then there were the women. Jesus had had to rebuke his mother. (Luke 2:49; Luke 8:31; John 2:4.) Mary Magdalene out of whom he had cast seven devils was doubtless one, also. There was Martha who had an ill feeling towards Mary. The brethren of Jesus were also in the meeting. (Luke 10:40.) Once their infidelity would not let them believe on Jesus. (John 7:5.) They evidently had been converted. The resurrection had evidently converted them. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was here and prayed *with* them and they did not pray *to* her as the Roman Catholic church teaches.

## FILLING UP THE NUMBER OF THE APOSTLES. Vs. 15-26.

15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names, together were about an hundred and twenty,)

16 Men *and* brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aeldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.

21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

23 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all *men*, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

The prayer meeting commenced with eleven (Vs. 13) and increased to 120. It seems from 1 Cor. 15:6 that there were 500 followers of Jesus, 120 of whom had come to the daily prayer meeting. Peter commences a speech with a confirmation of the supernatural origin of the Psalms, for he quotes from Psalm 41:9, saying that the Holy Ghost spoke in the Psalm through the mouth of David. In spite of the attacks of modern destructive criticism we must believe with Peter that the Holy Ghost inspired the Psalms. While Judas fulfilled prophecy, he was not compelled thereby to do wrong. The prophecy simply foretold, but did not cause it. If Peter had been like modern fanatics he would have

railed at Judas and called him hard names and epithets, but he left God to judge him.

There has been some discussion as to the apparent discrepancy between Peter's account of the end of Judas and that of Matthew (Matt. 27:5). But this discrepancy is easily harmonized thus: Judas probably hung himself on a tree overlooking the valley. The rope broke and he fell and was dashed upon the rocks below, and his bowels gushed out. An ordinary fall would hardly have done it. Peter uses the language of sarcasm, as he says Judas purchased for himself. He did purchase it *for himself*; to die a horrible death in it.

Peter then proposes that some one be elected to fill the place left vacant by Judas' death. There has been an assertion made by some that this was an unwarranted act of Peter, but those who assert it have given no good reason for such assertion. An apostle was one set apart from the band of disciples. An apostle was one who had seen the Lord. So Paul's words teach (See 1 Cor. 9:1). Jesus chose twelve apostles from his disciples to be with him. There were many disciples, but only twelve apostles. This number was the foundation of the Christian church and was in accordance with the twelve patriarchs, the sons of Jacob, who were the foundation of the Old Testament church. The number twelve needed to be complete. There was a difference of opinion as to who should be chosen. Two men were proposed. And in order to settle the disagreement they resorted to the casting of lots. This was a favorite method among the Jews. Lots were cast in the choosing of the scape goat and in dividing the land of Canaan when the Israelites took possession of it. They prayed that God would direct in the casting of the lot. This was in harmony with scripture. Solomon says, "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing is of the Lord." (Prov. 16:33.) We believe these disciples prayed and the Lord directed in the choice of Matthias.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE BLESSING RECEIVED.

- I. The Promise of the Father Realized. Vs. 1-13. The Sermon of Peter. Vs. 14-36. The Effect of the Outpouring of the Spirit and the Sermon, on the Outside World. Vs. 37-41. Effect of the Outpouring of the Spirit upon the Church. Vs. 42-47.

#### THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER REALIZED. Vs. 1-13.

1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilæans?

8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

The day of Pentecost had now come (A. D. 30, May 28). Thank God for that day of Pentecost. But for Pentecost this

wicked world would have destroyed itself. It was called Pentecost because it was the fiftieth day after the beginning of the Passover. (The word Pentecost is the Greek meaning fiftieth.) So much of Jewish life and customs was contained in it that it was called by several names. It was called The Feast of Weeks because it was a week of weeks, or seven weeks from the Passover. It was called the *Feast of Harvest* because it was a feast of thanksgiving for the harvest. It was called *The Feast of First Fruits* because on this day the Jews offered the first fruits of their harvest to God in bread made of the wheat. It also commemorated the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai, which occurred fifty days after the Israelites left Egypt. There is good reason to believe it was on Sunday. In the Modern Church, it is called Whitsuntide, or White Sunday, because of the white garments worn by those who are baptized on that day.

Notice some of the conditions here which brought the fire from heaven, which if any church follows today it can have the blessing.

1. They were *all* there—all out to prayer meeting. Would it not astound a modern pastor to see all his flock out to prayer meeting? When a church is seeking the fullness with an intensity that brings them all out to pray for it, they are a long way towards their Pentecost.
2. They were all there with one accord. We have shown in Chapter 1, Vs. 14, that the exact translation is *with united zeal*. It was not a sleepy, sluggish concern of mind. It was a united zeal in seeking the blessing. Such union of the right kind of zeal is very effective. God loves to have us fervent in our prayers. Mary and Martha were in harmony over the house work. James and John were no longer the objects of envy over their seeking the first place in the kingdom. All the church were united.
3. They were all praying. They made the fullness of the Spirit a subject of prayer.

The Spirit came to purify their hearts (Acts 15:9) *suddenly*. Some in this day teach that purification is by growth and is, therefore, a gradual process. It was not so here; nor is it so taught in the Bible. But the work took place *immediately*.

There was a sound “as of a rushing, mighty wind.” Some people have speculated on whether it was wind or the *sound* of wind. Why not understand it just as it reads? It was a super-



natural sound, no doubt, to call the attention of all Jerusalem to what took place. This sound filled all the place where they were.

There was not only a sound for the ear, but a demonstration for the eye—an appearance of tongues of fire resting on the head of each. Notice the tongues were not fire, but like fire—“as fire.” There was no heat in them, but they symbolized the fact that the power of Pentecost was to be in the tongue, making them effective witnesses, as Jesus said in Chapter 1:8. This symbol rested not on the twelve, but all in the assembly, both male and female. Henceforth the mission of the church for all ages was to be testimony—the witnessing tongue. God calls a few directly to the ordained ministry and special pulpit work, but he calls *all* to be witnesses, and Pentecost fully qualifies for testimony.

“They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” Hitherto under the Old Dispensation the Spirit in his sanctifying, energizing power had come on only a few, such as kings and prophets who were called to some special work, but now the Spirit was to come on and fill all of God’s people. It was not only the prophets, but all the company—the apostles and the 120 (See chap. 1:15). Under the Old Dispensation the indwelling of the Spirit seems to have been transitory. Now it was to be permanent. This was what Moses had desired. (Numbers 11:29.)

This blessing was called being “filled with the Holy Ghost.” The term “filled” is very expressive. To be filled with anything means there is nothing else in that which is filled, not even a vacuum. There was, therefore, no sin, no carnal mind in those *filled* with the Holy Spirit. (See Acts 15:9.) The Spirit that filled, cleansed all unrighteousness from their hearts by his incoming.

The result of this filling was, they began to speak. Speaking is the accompaniment of the fullness of the Holy Spirit. We have just said that the special power of Pentecost was to make them efficient witnesses and they began to exercise their power of testimony immediately. Jesus had told them “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,” and it proved so here. Wherever we read of any one being filled with the Holy Ghost, we read that they spoke (See Luke 1:41-42, and 66; Acts 5:31; Eph. 5:18 and 19). Pentecost is the cure for tied tongues. Those who

have had their Pentecost need no human urging to testify for Jesus.

“They not only spoke, but they spoke with other tongues.” There has been a good deal of question as to whether they spoke in different languages or people of different languages were made to understand them speaking in their mother tongue. We prefer to believe the record as it reads. It was what the hour demanded, as all nationalities were represented at Jerusalem, gathered for the Passover. And thus the news and gospel message radiated out over the known world in a short time. It was not necessary to speak in different tongues after Pentecost, because Greek was spoken all over the known world at that time. Some have supposed that the object of the gift of tongues was to convince the ungodly. Others have thought it was to enable them to reach many people. But it seems to us it was a symbol, teaching the truth that the gospel was to go to all tongues and nations, through testimony, just as the fire was a symbol of the tongue as the great instrument of declaring the truth, so the many tongues showed that it was to be heralded among all nations.

They “spoke with other tongues.” They talked differently after Pentecost, so that people were reached by them that could not otherwise be reached. And so will the soul that gets its Pentecost in these days. It will speak with another tongue—entirely different and will reach men as never before.

All that is necessary to show the fallacy of the modern “tongue movement” is this: At Pentecost those who heard them, understood them. It was none of the modern gibberish manifested in the tongue movement, understood by no one. Abbott says, “There is no authority whatever for the opinion that this gift of tongues was bestowed to enable the primitive Christians to preach the Gospel in the various languages of the world without learning them. Greek was then spoken throughout the civilized world, so that such a gift for such a purpose was little needed . . . and in no instance in the New Testament is the gift of tongues ever used for preaching the Gospel to those ignorant of that language.”

It seems that the best of the Jews that were scattered among the nations had come up to the Passover at Jerusalem and had not

yet returned home. They were "devout men," a good deal like Simeon, who were waiting for the Messiah, and they gladly received the truth as Peter preached. The fact that over one hundred and twenty people were at one time filled with the Holy Ghost brought out a great crowd. It would today. Any Spirit-filled church will become a center of attraction. It always works that way. We pity those preachers who have forgotten or who never knew that the Lord wants his servants to preach with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Such preaching backed by a church filled with the Holy Spirit will always bring out the multitude.

This multitude were not only amazed to see the demonstrations of tongues of fire on the heads of these people, but still more to think that these inhabitants of Galilee were able to talk their language, and make them understand. It does not mean that every Spirit-filled man spoke all the languages, but that every one heard some of the crowd speak a language he could understand. How different the modern tongue craze that utters sounds and calls it the unknown tongue. There is no such thing mentioned in the New Testament as the unknown tongue. It is a grievous mistake that our translators have made in so translating some New Testament words.

What did these scores of Spirit-filled people speak? It certainly would be very interesting to know. Verse 11 says they told "the wonderful works of God." It must have been his wonderful work in their own individual souls. The same Spirit works in those who are given up to him today. He cleanses, illuminates, fills, and reveals the truth. Peter's sermon is an illustration of this. How the Spirit did reveal truth to Peter! What light Peter had on the Scriptures! Hear him quote from the prophets Joel, Isaiah and Ezekiel (Vs. 17), and from the Psalms (Vs. 25-27). He never preached that way before. No one would ever have imagined him thus applying Scripture a few days before. The Holy Spirit made him a scriptural preacher. Among other things, the Holy Spirit gives light on the interpretation of God's word.

No wonder they were all amazed. Such a thing had never been heard of before in the history of the world as the Holy Spirit being poured out on everybody, both prophets and laymen. Hitherto only a few—priests, prophets, and kings, had received the fullness

of the Spirit. But now it was to be the gift universal for all classes and sexes. No wonder they asked *What will this be?* (This is the literal translation.) They meant what will come from this?

Was there ever a genuine revival that did not provoke opposition? There were two classes of people here—the “devout men” (Vs. 5), who received the truth and were saved that day, and the mockers of verse 13. The latter said the disciples were drunk. Today they are called fanatics. There is a similarity in some of the actions of Spirit-filled men and drunken men. Both spirits—the Holy Spirit and alcohol—affect somewhat the physical system, more or less. Paul says the fullness of the Spirit results in “speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.” Eph. 5:19. Much of this a drunken man will do, although the singing may not be spiritual. “New wine.” The word in the Greek is *gleukos*. It means literally *sweet wine*. It is the word from which comes our word glucose. The Pentecost came the last of May. The grape harvest was not until August. “From grapes dried in the sun and soaked in old wine a *sweet wine* was manufactured, which is said to have been especially intoxicating.” (Jahn’s Archeology, Sec. 69.) Hence “to be sweetened” was a Rabbinical equivalent for “to be drunk.” And here, “They were full of sweet wine,” is equivalent to “They were very drunk.”

#### THE SERMON OF PETER. Vs. 14-36.

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judæa, and all *ye* that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day.

16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

19 And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:

20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come :

21 And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words ; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know :

23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain :

24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death : because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

25 For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved :

26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad ; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope :

27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life ; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

29 Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne ;

31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses.

33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

34 For David is not ascended into the heavens : but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

This was the first sermon of the kind ever preached. It was a sermon in the Holy Ghost dispensation, preached by a man once sinful, but now filled with the Holy Ghost. It will be noticed that this sermon by this Spirit-filled man extolled Jesus. The Holy Spirit in us always exalts Jesus. If we think we have the Spirit of God and do not exalt Jesus, we are mistaken.

Peter stood up *with* the eleven, as one of them. He was one of

and *with* them, and not one *over* them as Roman Catholicism will have it. He was not pope over the rest of them. He quotes himself, to the elders of the church, as one of them, in his epistle, and tells them not to lord it over God's heritage. (See 2 Pet. 5:1-3.) Could there be anything more unscriptural or more unreasonable than popery? Peter was spokesman, simply the representative of others, as all could not speak at once and instruct the people. He was not the first pope. He was now addressing the multitude who had gathered.

The first part of the sermon was a defense against the charge of drunkenness. He shows that it was impossible for them to be drunk at the third hour of the day (nine o'clock in the morning). It takes time to get drunk. There is a contrast here. The Lord does not have to take time to fill *his* people. He does it immediately. Peter takes his text from a passage in the prophet Joel—Chapter 2:28-32. This passage speaks of two occurrences—the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the second coming of Christ. These two great subjects were in the first Pentecostal sermon. Let no man separate them or say that the preaching of either is a hindrance to the other.

“In the last days.” This expression is the same as saying, “In the last dispensation.” It had now begun—the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. The length of this dispensation no one knows. This quotation of Peter filled with the Holy Spirit, from Joel, shows that he believed in the divine inspiration of the Old Testament. Notice, Peter does not say, that Joel speaks it, but says, “Saith God.” God spoke through Joel and the other prophets.

God poured out his Spirit at the beginning of this dispensation—of the Holy Spirit. So we do not need any more to pray for the Holy Spirit to be sent down from heaven, for he is all about us ready to come into our hearts if we will open them. The Spirit himself and not his gifts has been poured out.

Notice the first result of this outpouring is not the power to work miracles or to speak in tongues or to exercise brilliant gifts, but to prophecy. This is the same thing as qualifying to testify—Chapter 1:8. The real power of the Pentecostal baptism is power to testify or *prophecy*. To prophecy is more than the limited idea of foretelling events. It means to speak for another. So the

great result of the Pentecostal baptism is the power to declare divine truth. Cleansing the heart from all sin takes out the unwillingness, and cowardice, and the sinful nature which would make our lives so inconsistent as to hinder the effect of our words. In 1 Cor. 14:24-25 we see that prophecy, which is telling what God gives us to tell, is the greatest of all gifts. This is the reason Peter speaks of it here first of all. He also says it is not confined to either sex. But woman, as well as man, may and will give public utterance to the truth as revealed to them by God. And what the disciples did when first filled with the Holy Ghost—declare “the wonderful works of God,” (Vs. 11,) is what God wants all his Spirit-qualified people to do.

This quotation from Joel not only describes the inauguration of this last dispensation by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, but shows it is to be completed by the second coming of Christ (Vs. 19-20). So here, we have the whole dispensation complete, with the signs that will precede its end. The dreams and visions are revelations of the will of God inferior to his revelation in his word. And now that we have a complete Bible, as they had not in Apostolic times, it is not necessary for God to speak in visions as at that time.

And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call upon the Lord in this last great dispensation, here described, shall be saved. But there is no promise of any further probation after this dispensation has passed away. To call upon the name of the Lord means to repent and be baptized, as shown in verse 38. It does not say we must join some particular church or believe some special creed. It was no longer Jews, but all nations could be saved if they called upon the name of the Lord.

Having stated his text he now preaches Jesus. The believer who has had his Pentecost is filled with the Holy Spirit, who always extolls Jesus. Having told them that whosoever should call on the name of the Lord should be saved, he begins to show them that this salvation was made possible through the sacrifice and atonement of the despised Jesus of Nazareth. The first statement he makes is that Jesus was approved of God “by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did by him.” Field says, “Here we find a concise but sublime summary of scriptural teachings relative to

miracles. The scattered rays are here brought to a focus. It is expressly asserted (1) that miracles are the immediate work of God, in distinction from those events which he brings to pass by the immediate efficiency of second causes. (2) That they were enabled openly and publicly, when all had opportunity not only to witness, but to scrutinize and test them. (3) That they were such and so wrought that the people among whom they occurred could not but know their existence and character, 'As ye yourselves also know.' (4) The purpose was to demonstrate to beholders and all others cognizant of them that Jesus Christ was a man approved of God. (5) These miracles are important proofs of Christianity. By them an obligation was laid on the people to believe in Christ and to obey his word." Thus, by their own personal knowledge of the miracles of Jesus, he established the truth of his sermon by facts well known to them—the miracles of Jesus.

God gave his Son to them, but they crucified him. They could not have crucified Jesus if God had not permitted it and ordained him for a sacrifice. This is another rendering of John 3:16, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, etc." But God released him from the sorrows of death. Death could not hold him because he was sinless and it will not be able to hold those in the tomb whom he saves from sin. Peter now quotes Psalms 16:8-11 to prove that the resurrection had been foretold, by David. This sermon of Peter is a model in its use of Scripture. He proves his points by Scripture. This passage from the Psalms is double in its interpretation like many of the Psalms. While, referring to David primarily, it also is a prophecy of Christ. "This double reference will surely give no trouble to those who believe that Christ was a perfect man, and that in his resurrection as in his life, he exemplifies in its perfection that experience which is imperfectly exemplified in all his saints, and this whether they preceded and believed in a Messiah to come, or follow and believe in a Messiah who has been revealed." (Abbott.) What David wrote here is a description of the comfortable experience of the godly. A literal exact translation is thus, "I am accustomed to see the Lord always before my face, for he is at my right hand that I should not be disturbed." He said that for this reason his heart rejoiced (an inward condition) and he was glad (the outward



expression). He says still further, "My flesh shall rest in hope." This refers to his present experience of hope for the future, which gives present rest of soul. He does not believe the Lord will leave his soul in Hades—the place of departed spirits, but will resurrect it. The word Hell here is not properly translated, but refers to the abode of departed spirits, both good and bad. Gehenna, meaning the place of punishment of lost souls, is another Greek word entirely.

"Neither will thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption." The word translated *holy one*, does not refer to Jesus, but to David. It is a word in the Greek never applied to Jesus. It refers to David—one of the saints of God. In all ages God has had holy people or saints. God will not let his saints see corruption (it is better translated—Annihilation), but will raise them from the grave. This being true of David, was much more so of his greater Son, Jesus Christ. So Peter proves the resurrection of Jesus to have been as David had prophesied.

We have been accustomed to regard David as only a psalmist or writer of sacred songs, but here we are told that he was a prophet. He prophesied (Vs. 31) of the resurrection of Christ. He had a prophetic instinct, although he did not understand all that the Holy Spirit prophesied through him.

So Peter shows that Jesus was crucified and arose from the dead according to prophecy, and ascended to the right hand of God and shed forth this—the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Verse 33 is the pith of the whole sermon.

And now Peter comes to the climax of his sermon in verse 36. It is this: The resurrection of Jesus had proved that the despised Nazarene was Lord and also King of the Jews, and they had killed this one whom God had shown was their King and Messiah.

#### THE EFFECT OF THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT AND THE SERMON ON THE OUTSIDE WORLD. Vs. 37-41.

37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one

of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.

40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.

The immediate result of the sermon was seen in the conviction of the great multitude of thousands. These were not the Jews of Jerusalem, but mostly those devout Jews who had come up to the Passover to Jerusalem, from all the countries of the known world (Vs. 5-11). No doubt many of them had joined in the cry, "Crucify him," not knowing any better—having been misinformed as to Jesus. It says they "were pricked to the heart." This expression is used twice in the New Testament and a similar expression is used in Acts 7:54. The convicting power of the Holy Ghost is likened to the piercing through the soul by a sharp instrument. This is seen in three cases of conviction—that of this multitude, the conviction of Saul in Acts 9:5, and the conviction of the hearers of Stephen. Notice the difference. The Greek words in each instance are different. In this instance it says they were "pricked to the heart" as Peter preached; when Stephen preached it says, "They were cut to the heart." *The work of the Spirit in conviction was the same, but it was differently received.* The Spirit worked on different attitudes of heart. In the one case upon those who were only pricked because they did not fight conviction. In the case of Stephen's hearers, they were *sawn asunder* (the literal translation) because they rebelled against conviction. The Spirit works the same on all hearts, but the manifestations are different because the subjects on which he works are different. Therefore, do not think the Spirit is not working on your heart because the manifestations are not the same as with other people.

There was little need of exhortation to close up this sermon. These honest hearted Jews had received new light and they acted up to it immediately. The only question with them was, to know how to make matters right with God, whom they had insulted by crucifying his Son. It does not take people long to get saved who

are honest in yielding to conviction. But what could they do? They could not undo the awful deed of the crucifixion of Jesus.

God has a way of escape for us, even though we cannot undo the past. We can repent of our sins, and if we do, we shall receive remission (or forgiveness of sins). Repentance literally means to change the mind afterwards. They had been guilty of murdering Jesus, the Son of God, thinking him a blasphemer and false Messiah. Now, after the deed was done, they saw their sin. They changed their mind and now saw he was the true Messiah and that they had sinned in crucifying him. Repentance is seen in the prodigal coming to himself and changing his attitude of mind as regards sin. This change of attitude results in the abandonment of sin and restitution and confession.

He also commanded them to be baptized—not to save them, but as the next step that naturally follows repentance. Baptism is the public acknowledgment that a soul has repented.

There are people who try to hide in a crowd and make repentance general. They acknowledge that all mankind are sinners in general, and that the human race needs to repent. But they have never made it a personal matter. But God deals with men individually. He gets at the crowd by working upon each individual. Each one must take the saving medicine for himself. It was not enough, that the Jewish nation as a whole, repent of their sins. So Peter says, "Every one of you." Each of us must repent for ourselves. Some of the Roman Catholic missionaries have sprinkled with water a multitude of heathen converts *en masse*. But this was not what Peter preached. And *they* say he was the first Pope. This baptism was to be in the name of Jesus Christ, as the only hope of their being forgiven.

"*For the remission of sins.*" We said above that remission means forgiveness. It does and it means more. The word remission means taking away. *Sins*, means sins of act, or actual sins. The only sense in which acts can be taken away is by taking away the guilt and the defilement, for acts can not be taken away after they have been committed. The defilement caused by our sinful actions, is taken away when we are pardoned, for we are regenerated at the same time and the new nature makes love of sin impossible. So the love of sin is gone in regenerated people. This is the

washing of regeneration (Titus 3:5). Abbott says remission means not only forgiveness but "the entire cleansing of the heart from actual sins." Some theologians call it the cleansing away of acquired depravity, which is the result of our sins which we have committed. We cannot commit sin without defiling the soul. This does not refer to the native inclination to evil with which we all are born, and which is removed only by the second work in the gift of the Holy Ghost.

But in addition to this they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. This does not mean that repentance and baptism would bring the Holy Ghost in his entire cleansing power at the same time. For the disciples in the upper room did not obtain the Holy Spirit by repentance and baptism, for they were not baptized at that time; nor did they at that time receive forgiveness. They had been saved for a long time, and baptized, without doubt, under the ministry of John the Baptist. Peter is showing these inquirers how to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. He wanted to get them to the place where they would be candidates for the second work. We have seen sinners properly indoctrinated who were converted and then sought and obtained entire sanctification the *same* day. Who will say it was not so here? Notice the gift of the Holy Spirit is not the same as the *gifts* of the Holy Spirit. The former is himself. The gifts, he brings with him, when he comes into the heart to dwell.

"For the promise is unto you." He refers to the promise of the Father in Chapter 1:4, which had been made through Joel, Isaiah and Ezekiel. He goes on to declare that the promise of the Father was "to you and your children" (the Jews, and to then that are afar off, the Gentiles).

Having finished his sermon and having seekers for salvation he now begins to testify and exhort. Every preacher ought to be able to do both. He ought to have an experience of salvation, and if he does like Peter, he will surely testify. Testimony is getting scarce in these days among the preachers. Paul, too, said Jesus had called him to be both a minister and a witness. "Exhortation, too, is rare in the modern church." His exhortation was "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." The literal translation is, *Be ye saved*. They were to be saved from this *crooked*

generation in which they lived by being saved from its influence and from the punishment that was about to be visited upon Jerusalem in its destruction by the Romans. We are in an evil world today that we need to be saved from. God demands that his people shall be separate from this world. Friendship with the world is enmity against God.

Three thousand people right on the spot gave heed to his exhortation and were saved from the "crooked generation" by accepting his word and repenting of their sins and were baptized to show their faith. Real repentance will save us from the world. It means turning our back upon the nonsense, pleasures and vanities of the world.

These 3,000 souls were added. Our translation says "unto them." But this is not in the original. Verse 47 says "*the Lord added souls.*" These souls were added to the spiritual body of Christ.

#### THE EFFECT OF THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT UPON THE CHURCH ITSELF. Vs. 42-47.

42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

It is very encouraging to read here that "they continued stedfastly in the doctrine." Doubtless by "all" the original 120 and the new converts are here meant. All had received the gift of the Holy Ghost and hence were steadfast. Entire sanctification makes converts steadfast and keeps them from backsliding. It is the establishing grace. This work in their hearts was not a temporary excitement. They were teachable—they *continued* in the apostles'

doctrine or teaching. Get your converts entirely sanctified to keep them.

Fanatics will not receive teaching. Such fanaticism as we sometimes hear, that "man cannot teach me. I get my teaching from God," was not the case with them or with really humble people today. God has ordained teachers in his church, and it is fanaticism to say "man cannot teach me." They continued "in the fellowship" of the apostles, too. There is a great deal in the fellowship of the saints. We say in the apostle's creed, "I believe in the communion of saints." One of the marks of genuine salvation is a love for and a fellowship with the people of God. When we get saved we find a family tie with saved people in some respects stronger than natural ties. They can understand and sympathize with us better than unsaved relations. If we are saved we will fellowship that part of the church that believes in the prayer, class and holiness meetings.

No doubt they celebrated the Lord's Supper, for it says they continued in "breaking of bread and prayers." Thank God for the gift of continuance. Thank God for the gift of continuance which is given when people really get the Holy Ghost.

"Fear came upon every soul." There are two kinds of fear, that of the slave and guilty, who fear punishment, and that reverential, filial fear which a son feels toward the parent whom he loves. At the same time they had gladness mixed with it. (Vs. 46.)

They had real Christian socialism or communion. Not the absolute giving up of all property to a common fund, but the giving up of property to a common fund as far as it was needed to support the poor. This was a purely voluntary giving up of property. (See Chapter 5:4.) Each could give up as much or little as they pleased. We do not find that it was practiced anywhere else, except at Jerusalem, and only at this time when there were many strangers present. It was an enlargement of hospitality for the time being. Selling all and putting into a common fund and letting all share alike is a dangerous doctrine, and an encouragement to the lazy and shiftless. So it has usually proven. It is not really the best way to help the poor. It often makes their condition worse.

"With one accord" they met in the temple and broke bread from house to house. Here we have the modern idea of cottage

prayer meetings established. This was something new in the world and worth speaking about, because hitherto, under the Jewish economy, religious services were held only in the temple and synagogue, and no doubt like many today, people had come to think that religion was only for the meeting house.

Let us notice still further the thought contained in the phrase "with one accord." It has been said twice before this (Chapter 1:4; 2:1). The harmony continued. When Christians get together and lay aside all contention, as they did in seeking the blessing, the Holy Spirit will burn out the carnal mind, which is the source and root of dissension among Christians. Jesus prayed for their sanctification in order that they might "be one," and now it was accomplished by their sanctification. Paul said the cause of the strife and division in the church at Corinth was because they were "yet carnal." Carnality, not holiness, makes division. Any church that is full of strife and division is not entirely sanctified. Nothing but holiness will unite the sects of Christendom.

They ate their meat (food) with gladness. It was not only good for their digestion, but for their souls to mix gladness with their eating. The daily meals of Christians ought to be interspersed with the gladness of salvation. Children ought to be raised in such an atmosphere. Parents who know and have such harmony are doing more for their children than to leave them a legacy of gold and silver. The next place to heaven is a real Christian home. Have such a home! Let your children know that the Christian religion is not austerity or gloominess!

"Singleness of heart." Three ingredients were mingled in their meals—food, gladness and holiness (singleness of heart). This condition of things will make a heaven on earth. The phrase, *singleness of heart*, is remarkable. The word is *aphelotes* in the Greek. It means *without a stone*. It refers to the soil, unmixed with any stones, pure soil. They formerly had the stony heart of the carnal mind, but it had been removed at Pentecost, and now only the spiritual mind remained. They had become single-minded by losing the carnal mind. "This is the only time this Greek word is used in the New Testament. The word had to be coined, as it is not found in any classic Greek writers. "A new experience

*had come into the world and the Holy Ghost had to coin a new word to express it.*" (Daniel Steele, D. D.)

And so the holiness revival went on. One phase of it that always is noticed in a revival of holiness is "praising God." This is the way it always works, both in ancient and modern times.

But no genuine work of God ever goes unimpeded or unopposed. One of the proofs of the genuineness of holiness is it always arouses the malignant opposition of the devil. This is one of the proofs of its divine origin. For the present, however, they had "favor with all the people." A work of holiness rightly understood always wins the favor of men, until it disturbs fossilized ecclesiasticism. The greatest enemies of holiness have always been in the professed church, that crucified Jesus, our example of perfect holiness. When holiness begins to attack sin, then persecution begins. "As yet, however, persecution may not have arisen. The beauty of holiness was perceived and admired by the people, but its severe requirements and condemnation of popular sins was not at first felt. The spark was allowed to grow into a flame before the blast of persecution; the storms did but increase and extend it." (Abbott.)

"And the Lord added daily to the church such as should be saved." Here we have another instance of the insertion of words that are not in the original. It should have been translated only "The Lord added." He added these souls to himself—to the invisible church of the first born. The Lord never adds people to the visible church. That is the work of man. They do it themselves. Notice the Lord did the adding. They did not do it themselves. The meaning in the original of the words "such as should be saved" is "such as were in the way of salvation." He never adds sinners. There were, no doubt, some hypocrites and some self-deceived people. But the Lord did not add them. He added only those who were in the way of salvation.



## CHAPTER III.

### HOLY PEOPLE ARE THE BENEFACTORS OF MANKIND.

In Deed. Vs. 1-11. In Word. Vs. 12-26.

#### IN DEED. Vs. 1-11.

1 Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, *being* the ninth *hour*.

2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;

3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.

4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.

5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted *him* up; and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God:

10 And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

11 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

It is impossible to be filled with the Spirit and not be a friend and benefactor to others. The blessing of full salvation gives the missionary spirit. This is the reason Jesus wanted his disciples to tarry until they were endued with this power. A holy heart gives us compassion for all the distressed and sorrowing of earth, and such people are always seeking to do good in all the walks of

life. Peter and John going up to the temple to pray could not pass by a poor cripple without having compassion upon him, and seeking to bless him. It was the natural expression of their holy hearts: Let us more fully consider the scene.

It is not known how soon after Pentecost the events of this chapter took place. Peter and John one day went up to the temple at the hour of prayer (3 P. M.). Under the Jewish economy there were three hours every day for sacrifice and prayer—at 9 A. M., one at noon and at 3 P. M. It seems to us there ought to be no less under the Christian dispensation. While we should always be in a prayerful spirit, it is well to have stated hours of prayer. Peter and John went to the temple to pray. It had not yet dawned on their minds that Judaism was to be replaced by Christianity. They had to learn it by degrees and by rough experiences. As they were entering the temple they met parties carrying a beggar, about forty years of age, who had been lame from his birth. This man was laid daily at the gate of the temple called The Beautiful Gate. It is not known for certain which gate this was. It was probably one of the exterior gates leading from the city into the temple. The Jewish law made alms-giving a part of religion. We have thought of the great surprise that this lame beggar met this day. He came as usual expecting only money and went away healed. By accident? No there are no accidents with God. He went in the line and direction of divine providence and met Peter and John just at the right time. There are no little things in the line of divine providence.

When he asked charity, instead of giving it to him, Peter said: "Look on us." He said this to get the man's complete attention and arouse his curiosity, and awaken in him an expectation of something. Pious Quarles says, "When thou seest misery in thy brother's face, let him see mercy in thine eye." Peter said to this man, "Look upon us." Happy is the Christian who, like Peter and John, can ask the world to look upon him, because he has, by divine grace, something spiritual to bestow. We ought to be so full of the Spirit as to be able to bestow something on people we meet. God does not call us to heal men's bodies, but we can be the channels through which he bestows spiritual gifts. Are we so conscious of the divine indwelling as to be able to say unhesi-

tatingly "Look on us." Here were two kinds of faith—the faith that the apostles had in the power they had to bestow, and the faith the man had to receive it. These were different degrees of faith. The one expected to receive, the other to give.

Peter said, in answer to his inquiring look, "Silver and gold have I none." What a false estimate we usually put upon real blessing. We act as if gold and silver and material blessings are the highest good. How many get puzzled at the material prosperity of the wicked and are mystified when a righteous man is poor in this world's goods. The trouble with them is they think the highest good in this world is money and material prosperity. But the righteous have riches of soul that are the true riches in the sight of God. This man probably thought, when Peter said this, that he was not going to get much, when he was really to receive what money could not buy—healing, and which he would not part with for money. He was like some people who seek religion with a cheap idea of it, but who find that there is more in it than they expected.

Then again many of us have no money to give people, when we might give more sympathy and love than we do, for money can not buy love. The poorest of us can give mercy and compassion. We can, like Peter and John, say, "Such as I have give I thee." In the great day of accounts we shall be held responsible, not because we did not give great amounts, but because we did not the things that the poorest can do—visit the sick and afflicted. Blessed is the man who in the name of Jesus of Nazareth is ready and anxious to give *such as he has*. Even a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple shall not lose its reward.

Notice the difference between Jesus and his disciples, in the methods of working miracles. When Jesus raised the dead young man, he said, "Young man, I say unto thee arise." But Peter did not talk thus, because his power was derived. He said, "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth rise up and walk." He asserted in the face of the oppositions and contumely that had been heaped upon the despised Jesus of Nazareth that there was power in that name. We think that he gloried in so declaring that there was power in this despised name of the crucified one, as Paul did in the ignominious cross. (Gal. 6:14.) He was like a man who had made

the discovery of power in a disreputable thing and gloried in the privilege of telling it. He joyfully adopts an unpopular name.

So Peter took him by the right hand to strengthen his faith. We can strengthen others faith. We do this in the altar service when we pray and urge others to believe on Jesus. Peter strengthened his faith and God strengthened his feet and ankle bones.

It was an immediate cure. He was not years in outgrowing his weakness. If God can make feet and ankles sound and well in a *moment*, who says he can not make the soul sound in a moment. The man commenced to leap and walk at once. Naturally he would have had to learn to walk for he had never walked (Vs. 2). But his walking shows that it was a miracle. No wonder that he leaped. This is natural to a man who has been divinely cured either soul or body. Jesus speaks of leaping for joy (Luke 6:23). If there were more leaping for joy we think the world would be more apt to believe that we had something worth having. Of course, the man went into the temple with them. God's house is attractive to saved souls and it is a good thing to "enter into his courts with praise and into his gates with thanksgiving."

All the people saw him walking and praising God. He did not say, "I will live it and say nothing about it." But he gave the glory to God. So should we in spite of the fact that people say, "Live your religion, but say nothing about it." If our religion was of our own manufacture we might well keep still, but as God is its author we must give him the glory. The miracles of the Bible were done openly. There was no opportunity to deceive the people, even if the disciples had so desired.

Christianity has always had its samples of the power of God. For the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.

"The healed man held Peter and John." He was so full of gratitude towards those who had been the means of his cure that he wanted to be with them. This is natural and it is right usually for converts to want to live in the company of those who were instrumental in their salvation. Some churches are great on sorting fish that others catch, but are unable to catch any themselves. Converts generally will keep alive better in the place where they were born than anywhere else. So Peter got a congregation. One

genuine convert is a greater advertisement of a meeting than a town flooded with circulars.

## IN WORD. Vs. 12-26.

12 And when Peter saw *it*, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go.

14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

17 And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did *it*, as *did* also your rulers.

18 But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

23 And it shall come to pass, *that* every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

26 Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

Having cured the man by divine power, Peter preached to the multitude which amazement had brought together. We see here

the use of miracles, especially at the beginning of this dispensation—to stamp the utterances of the apostles with divinity. It will be worth while for the Bible student to contrast this second sermon of Peter with his first sermon in chapter 2:14-26. In the first sermon he referred to the crucifixion of Jesus their king; in this second sermon, he refers to his future coronation.

Peter was a true preacher of Christ. He undertook to turn the attention of the people from himself to Jesus. He said, "Why do you look at John and I as if we had cured this man by our power," and then he preached Jesus to them. There are too many preachers who seem to think that the occupant of the pulpit, if not to be worshiped, is to be made the chief object of esteem in the church. When a preacher seeks to gain popularity by refusing to declare the plain "truth as it is in Jesus," whether men like it or not, he becomes a rival of Jesus Christ and that is dangerous business. When he seeks to turn the love and praise of men to himself he has been recreant to his mission. What an opportunity Peter had to exalt himself before the people! And how he did exalt Jesus!

Let us now notice the sermon. He begins by referring to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the fathers of the Jewish church, to show them that Christianity is a continuation of the old religion, and that he still held to Judaism, still reckoning himself as a Jew. Christianity was the flower developed from the bud of Judaism.

He tells them that notwithstanding God had glorified his Son Jesus Christ, they had crucified him, and preferred a murderer to the Son of God—referring to their choice of Barabbas (Luke 23:16-19). He goes further and accuses them of murdering Jesus. They spared a murderer in order to commit murder themselves. What had come over this man, Peter, to be so bold when a few days before he had been so cowed by a servant girl as to deny Jesus? He had been to Pentecost and received that fullness of the Spirit that makes cowards bold.

Now having stated the fact of Jesus the Son of God as their Messiah, and murdered Saviour, he makes to them the astounding declaration that faith in the name of the crucified Nazarene had healed this cripple.

Peter was a tactful preacher, and did all he could to soften this

stern message as far as his own words were concerned. He does not rant or call them hard names—hypocrites, etc., but says “Brethren.” Notice he says, “Brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it.” That is they were in ignorance as to the full meaning of their acts. They were not in ignorance (at least not the rulers) that they had condemned Jesus without proper evidence, and that the people condemned him without any evidence, taking the word of the rulers instead of knowing what they were doing. Judas probably was the least excusable. Ignorance is no excuse, though it may mitigate sin to some extent. They had the spirit of vindictiveness and murder in their hearts, and slew Jesus with wicked hands, even if they did not know who he was, yet they had the proofs that he was a good man by the many good acts and miracles he had performed.

“Repent ye therefore.” As we have shown in chapter 2, verse 38, repentance means change of mind or purpose as regards sin. Once they had their minds and purposes fully set upon committing sin, but repentance was a change of mind and purpose, such as leads to hatred of and abandonment of sin. “And be converted.” The word “convert” is a word very largely used today. It really means to turn about, to change the course of life. It is the work of man as well as repentance. Repentance means a changed attitude of heart and mind towards sin, and conversion means a change of our course consequent upon repentance. We change our course of life because we have changed our mind towards sin. These are both human acts—the human side of salvation. Two things follow (1) Our sins will be “blotted out.” This is a figure of wiping or cancelling out something charged on a book against us. The book here is the Book of God’s Remembrance. He will remember them against us no more forever (Ps. 51:1; Is. 43:25; Is. 44:23). This is justification or pardon. (2) Regeneration—the “times of refreshing.” The correct translation is “Repent, ye therefore and be converted unto the blotting out of your sins, so that there may come seasons of reviving from the presence of the Lord.” It is the figure of the new life which comes in the spring time of the year. It means the new life imparted to the soul by the Holy Spirit, which we call regeneration, in the experience of the individual penitent, and a revival of religion in the case of the church as a whole.

Notice the connection then—on the human side repentance and conversion or turning away from our sinful course. This is followed by pardon (justification), and the impartation of spiritual life (regeneration). Today we have come to use the term conversion, as combining the whole—repentance, turning from sin, justification and regeneration. *No man ever honestly repented and turned away from sin without obtaining pardon and regeneration.* But there are thousands who seek God, caring not so much to have their sins forgiven as to receive a mere emotional blessing.

“And he shall send Jesus Christ.” Here we have one of the instances where Jesus comes spiritually to the penitent soul. In our eagerness to establish the Second Advent, we must not mistake this for one of the places where it is taught, as it is in the next verse (“times of restitution of all things”). Here it means that Jesus comes spiritually to the penitent; in verse 21 it means he is to come literally to restore all things. The repentance of this crowd of sinners would not bring the Second Advent, for it is not conditional on the repentance of anybody. God has his set time for the Second Coming and no man can hurry it by any act of his.

He then goes on to say that Jesus, having been crucified, went to heaven to remain until it was time for him to come the second time to restore all things. There is a time when Jesus shall come again and restore all things. There will be a new heaven and a new earth (2 Peter 3:12-13). Then the Jews will see their Messiah again, either as a glorious friend or a just judge. And this is the teaching of the Old Testament prophets (Isa. 2:2-5; 11:6-9; Dan. 2:35-44; Micah 4:3-4). Moses, too, representative of the law, had prophesied of Jesus, calling him a prophet, like unto himself. Jesus was like Moses in that he was a mediator between God and man. Jesus was the mediator of a better covenant than that of Moses (Heb. 2-11). Peter tells them that this gospel of Jesus was offered to the Jews first before giving it to the Gentiles. And that it was a blessing in turning them from their sins. We learn from this that the great and chief blessing of the gospel is that it turns men from their sins, not merely from punishment of sin, but from sin itself. Strange then that any one in this twentieth century of grace should deny that we can be saved from sin.



## CHAPTER IV.

### HOLINESS PERSECUTED.

The First Persecution After Pentecost. Vs. 1-22. God Is the Refuge of His Persecuted Saints. Vs. 23-31. The Harmony and Power of a Sanctified Church. Vs. 32-37.

#### THE FIRST PERSECUTION AFTER PENTECOST. Vs. 1-22.

1 And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,

2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

3 And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.

4 Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,

6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them *is* manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny *it*.

17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all *men* glorified God for that which was done.

22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

The Book of Acts is the history of the church after it received the baptism with the Holy Ghost. The work of the Spirit in sanctifying, empowering and moving to preach and testify is the same in all ages, and the carnal mind is also the same, and it has always persecuted the saints in all ages. As long as the carnal mind remains in man there will be hostility in this world against holiness. People have tried to live so holy and blameless as to give no offense. But the holier we are the more offense do we give to the carnal mind. Jesus, who was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, was the worst persecuted of any that ever walked this earth. And the nearer we get to his spiritual likeness the more shall we suffer the persecution of the ungodly and carnal, as he did. The history of the Pentecostal church is a symbol of the history of every holiness revival since—the Spirit outpoured, many people saved and sanctified, and much persecution. Paul says, “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” Well did the holy martyr St. Stephen say of their persecution of the holy prophets, “Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?” (Acts 7:52). One of the marks of genuine holiness is its power to draw the opposition of the carnal mind, as the magnet draws steel. *One of the evidences of genuine holiness is the opposition it creates.*

Consequently the priests, the captain of the temple police and the Sadducees came upon Peter and John and stopped their preaching and arrested them. "Observe in this first persecution of the church a type of all that follow: A corrupt priesthood lead the way, the civil power is its instrument; the infidel world combines with and sustains the two." (Abbott.) The priests were angry with them for leading the people away from them. The police pretended the crowds that surrounded them were disturbers of the peace and the Sadducees, who were the infidels of the day, joined them. These classes were much disturbed that these men should teach without authority and the Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection, were especially disturbed because the apostles preached that Jesus had arisen. And so Peter and John passed the night in jail or prison, for doing good in healing the lame man.

However, it was too late to prevent the people from believing the Word, for they had heard it. The apostles might be imprisoned but they had delivered the message and the people had believed. Men may hinder the workmen, but when the truth is once planted in the heart, it can not be uprooted by persecuting the preachers. So it is refreshing to read that the number who believed was about five thousand. Three thousand at Pentecost and now five thousand, and a few days later it says "many." Some one says, "first three thousand, then five thousand, and then it set in like a regular equinoctial storm and they lost the count, and it says, 'And the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly.'" (Ch. 6:7.) Here we see the mighty power God puts in the hands of the church that gets the gift of the Holy Ghost. This is the very thing lacking in this day to take the world. See what this blessing meant to the world. "It would appear that on the fiftieth day after the death of Christ the apostles commenced their labors. 'Beginning in Jerusalem,' the very furnace of persecution, they first set up their banner in the midst of those who had been first in the crucifixion of Jesus, and were all elated with the triumph of that tragedy. No assemblage could have been more possessed of a disposition perfectly at war with their message than that to which they made their first address. And what was the tenor of the address? 'Jesus of Nazareth,' said Peter, 'being delivered with determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, Ye have taken

and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up—Therefore let all the house of Israel know, assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.’ One would have supposed that the same hands that had rioted in the blood of his Master would have now wreaked their enmity in that of this daring and, to all human view, most impolitic apostle. But what ensued? Three thousand souls were added that day to the infant church. In a few days the number was increased to five thousand; and in the space of about a year and a half, though the gospel was preached only in Jerusalem and its vicinity, yet, multitudes both of men and women and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. Now the converts, being driven by a fierce persecution from Jerusalem, went everywhere preaching the word, and in less than three years churches were gathered throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria and were multiplied.

“About two years after this, or seven from the beginning of the work, the gospel was first preached to the Gentiles; and such was the success, that before thirty years had elapsed from the death of Christ, his church had spread from Palestine throughout Syria; through almost all the numerous districts of Lesser Asia; through Greece, and the islands of the Aegean Sea, the sea coast of Africa, and even into Italy and Rome. . . . In the thirtieth year after the beginning of the work, the terrible persecution under Nero kindled its fires; then Christians had become so numerous at Rome, that, by the testimony of Tacitus, a ‘great multitude’ were seized. In forty years more we are told in a celebrated letter from Pliny the Roman governor of Pontus and Bythinia, that Christianity had long subsisted in these provinces so remote from Judea. Many of all ages and of every rank, of both sexes likewise, were accused to Pliny of being Christians. What he calls the contagion of this superstition (thus forcibly describing the irresistible and rapid progress of Christianity) had seized not cities only, but the lesser towns also, and the open country, so that the heathen temples were almost forsaken; few victims were purchased for sacrifice, and a long intermission of the sacred solemnities had taken place.” (Hopkins.)

Let professed Christianity with its millions get the same bless-

ing that the early church had and it would take this world in the next ten years. Holiness too was the basis of the Wesleyan revival, which was the greatest revival since Pentecost.

So the Jewish Sanhedrim was hastily gathered together the next day and Peter and John were brought into their midst. How troubled these ecclesiastical sinners must have felt. They thought that by crucifying Jesus they had stamped his cause with the brand of eternal infamy and destroyed it. But instead of putting out the fire, they found the flames were bursting forth in greater power. Now they were at their wits end surely. How many since have thought they could destroy or stamp out holiness. The more men persecute it, the stronger it becomes. This has always been the rule.

Now see the wonderful change in the Peter who a few weeks ago had been a coward and denied to a little servant maid his connection with Jesus. The holy fire had burned the cowardice all out of him. The Sanhedrim evidently thought to frighten Peter, asking, "By what power or by what name have ye done this?" They no doubt knew that the disciples had fled from fear when Jesus was arrested and they expected to frighten them again. But a different Peter now confronts them. He upsets their plans by his boldness (vs. 13). He not only tells them that the miracle was performed by the power of the name of Jesus, but he goes further and boldly declares that Jesus is the Messiah, and also the Saviour of mankind.

Peter then goes on to assert that Christianity is the only true religion. He would be called narrow, bigoted and dogmatic and uncharitable towards other religions had he lived now. But Christianity is the only true religion and it is a kindness to those in error to act and preach as if we believed it. Let us imitate the positiveness of Peter in declaring that this is the only way in which men can be saved.

This boldness of the Spirit-filled Peter astonished the Sanhedrim. They could not understand how these men, unaccustomed to speak in public assemblies, unlearned in the literature taught in the schools of the day, could speak with such ease and boldness. They did not understand that the Spirit was speaking through Peter, as Jesus had promised would be the case when they got into trouble

(See Luke 12:11-12). They tried to analyze it by human standards. We have seen people attempt in these days to detect by human methods, the secret of the power of men filled with the Holy Ghost. Jesus in his teaching was very bold in his utterances, and they took knowledge of Peter and John that they had been with Jesus and learned this boldness of him. Spirit-filled men are not cowards.

And what could the authorities say in the matter? There was the man who had been healed standing by them. A living witness stopped their gainsaying mouths. The sure proof of the virtue of a medicine is the cured men who have taken it. Christianity proves its divinity by its living witnesses. No other religion has an experience to which there could be witnesses. This is the difference between Christianity and all other religions. All other religions are but opinions and creeds.

So they had a session of this ecclesiastical court to see what they should do with these men. They were in a dilemma indeed. The miracle was so well known that they could not deny it, and that was what troubled them. So they concluded to threaten them and forbid their speaking in the name of Jesus any more. The great controversy is not so much against the truth as against its being spoken. Satan knows that if he can keep the truth locked up in men's hearts or in books, it will do little harm. We can enjoy all the religion we wish and have no persecution, if we will keep still about it. It is the testimony that stirs Satan's kingdom, and he is never so well pleased as when he can spike this great gun that works great havoc against his kingdom. Woe to the church and the holiness movement when there are no witnessing tongues!

The question when we meet with temptation through the threatenings and ostracism which testimony meets is, Shall we obey God or man? God says when men seek to stop our testimony, "Ye are my witnesses." Will we be cowards when the truth is at stake? It was a great test of the disciple's faith in God to stand against the highest authority in the church. It was the same as if the bishops and superintendents of the church today should forbid our testifying and threaten expulsion from the church. Peter and John uttered the true idea of testifying for Jesus thus, "We can but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

Any one who has an experience that they can keep still about needs a better experience. Real salvation is too big a secret to keep to one's self, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," said Jesus. The man who can keep still has no experience worth telling. The man who has really passed from death to life or has been sanctified wholly, has something he cannot retain and be quiet about it.

Notice, too, the apostles were not defiant to the authorities; did not show disrespect in their language or denounce those who threatened. They proved that they had "the Blessing." So we see being filled with the Spirit gives boldness to speak with a meek and quiet spirit.

#### GOD IS THE REFUGE OF HIS PERSECUTED SAINTS. Vs. 23-31.

23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou *art* God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is :

25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things ?

26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.

27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings : and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word.

30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal ; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together ; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

The persecuted apostles being released immediately went to "their own company." The old adage, "a man is known by the company he keeps" is emphatically true in the Christian life. These disciples did not go to their homes but to the assembly of the holy brethren. Holy people understand and can sympathize with each other better than with members of the same family who are

not entirely sanctified. The accusation has been made against the modern holiness people that they are clannish and like to get together. This is precisely what the holy people of the Pentecostal church did. They went to their own company. There is no such fellowship on earth as that of holy people. We believe in that article of the Apostles' creed, "I believe in the communion of *saints*." Just as far as churches are fully sanctified do we see true union.

It is delightful to read of their lifting their voices "with one accord." They were of one accord when seeking the blessing (Ch. 1:14). They were of the same "one accord" when the Holy Ghost came upon them (Ch. 2:1). They were also continuing daily in the temple and from house to house "with one accord" (Ch. 2:46) and here they pray with one accord (Vs. 24). They appeal in their emergency against the opposition of their enemies to the Almighty God who created all things, to help them. He is the refuge of his people in times of persecution. He has the power to protect his little ones. They either sang together or repeated the Second Psalm, and declared its divine inspiration in these words, "by the mouth of thy servant David hast said." We accept the testimony of these Spirit-filled men as to the inspiration of the Psalms of David, the higher critics notwithstanding. They recognized in the opposition of the Sanhedrim, the attitude of the carnal mind in all ages (not merely the time of David) against God. Let us when persecuted for righteousness recognize it as a part of the conflict of the ages between sin and holiness and tell our God about it. Let us like them not be surprised at the attitude of the carnal mind, but accept it as in the nature of things, foreseen by God.

Notice these persecuted servants of God did not pray so specifically to be protected from their enemies, as for boldness to declare the truth, and for divine attestation of it by miracles. They wanted grace to declare the word plainly and fearlessly. They did not fear the storm and ask God to still the storm, but wanted to be made more efficient. They wanted to carry on the battle. So instead of praying God to restrain the fury of their enemies they asked for greater power against them. They never thought of showing any fear, or shirking the responsibility that the baptism



of the Spirit brings. Courage is the great quality God wants us to have.

And as they were praying two things took place—the place was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. The particular and most important phenomenon was the filling with the Holy Ghost. The shaking of the place was only the accompaniment. On the day of Pentecost the sound of the rushing mighty wind was the accompaniment. There are many fillings and anointings of the Spirit upon the entirely sanctified. We ought to remember this and have frequent anointings. As our hearts expand we need more and more such experiences—one baptism that cleanses from sin but frequent anointings. God has special girdings for his saints in emergencies. Let us remember when we are opposed, that it is God whom men are fighting, and he will fit us for all emergencies. “They spoke the word with boldness.” As we have already remarked in Ch. 1-8, the chief power given to us when we receive “the blessing” is to be efficient witnesses for God. The tongue of fire is the great agency of God in spreading his truth.

#### THE HARMONY AND POWER OF A SANCTIFIED CHURCH.

Vs. 32-37.

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of *them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

35 And laid *them* down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

36 And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus,

37 Having land, sold *it*, and brought the money, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

No outward opposition can harm a sanctified church. It is only when inward dissensions arise that the cause languishes. It is refreshing to see this church invincible because united. In every age there has been some special doctrine that God wants emphasized

and about which the contest rages. In the apostles' day it was as to whether Jesus really arose from the dead. Rom. 10-9 shows this. This filling of the Holy Spirit recorded in verse 31 gave the disciples great boldness in declaring the resurrection of Jesus, which was a doctrine very unpalatable to the ecclesiastical authorities. In this generation the contest of the ages rages about the doctrine of holiness. And we who preach this unpalatable doctrine need the fullness of the Spirit to preach with boldness. Nothing but the fullness of the Spirit will fully equip us for it and give us the necessary boldness.

So we see here three results of the gift of the Holy Spirit—unity of the church, power to preach the gospel and practical benevolence. Let us look now at the third. "Neither was there any among them that lacked." The socialism of this Pentecostal church has been misunderstood by some. It does not mean as we said in 2:45 that everybody put all they had into a common fund and shared alike. But there was a liberal distribution as far as there was any need—all the needy were provided for. Perfect love to God means perfect love to man. When they sold their goods and laid the price at the apostles' feet, it does not necessarily mean that they laid the *full* price there. Here we first notice Barnabas, who figures quite prominently in further history.

## CHAPTER V.

### CONSECRATION.

The Results of Pretended Consecration. Vs. 1-16. The Results of Genuine Consecration. Vs. 17-42.

#### THE RESULTS OF PRETENDED CONSECRATION. Vs. 1-16.

1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

2 And kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy *to it*, and brought a certain part, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land?

4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried *him* out, and buried *him*.

7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband *are* at the door, and shall carry thee out.

10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and carrying *her* forth, buried *her* by her husband.

11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.

14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)

15 Inasmuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

16 There came also a multitude *out* of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

Consecration is a great subject. It is one of the conditions necessary to the obtainment of entire sanctification. It is a very important matter because when we are entirely consecrated, the faith that brings entire sanctification springs up spontaneously and the work of entire sanctification is performed by the Holy Spirit. It being such an important matter, there are all sorts of imitations and counterfeits. (Only valuables are counterfeited.) There are thousands who are offering a bogus, incomplete consecration to God. They think to beat him down on his requirements. They think they can deceive the Holy Spirit and get the blessing at a discount. They think they can keep back part of the price as did Ananias and Sapphira.

Notice the contrast between true and false consecration in the last verse of the previous chapter and the first verse of this chapter. It says of Barnabas (Ch. 4:37) "Having sold it and laid the money at the apostles' feet" but (Ch. 5:1) a certain man named Ananias with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession and kept back part of the price." Here we have what is going on all the time in the modern church—professions of entire consecration, both genuine and spurious. The Bible is a remarkable book of biography and is full of marked contrasts of character.

The name Ananias means "Jehovah is gracious." The name Sapphira means "beautiful." Bengel remarks on this, "Their names were favorable and beautiful. Their principles were bad." Here were a wedded couple of one mind—to offer a false consecration. It was a false consecration because they professed that it was complete. It was hypocrisy.

We get light here on the socialism of the Pentecostal church. A giving up of all their property for the treasury of the church was not required, as we see by verse 4 where Peter says, "While it remained was it not thine own? And after it was sold was it not in thine own power?" This shows that it was not compulsory to put it into the church treasury. (See our comments on Ch. 1:45

and Ch. 4:35.) The act of giving all to the church treasury was voluntary. They seemed to want to get the reputation of being good givers when they were not. They gave to be seen of men. This profession of entire consecration was in a public assembly.

Our use of our money is a good test of our consecration. Covetousness is an awful sin. It makes money a god. It is a common sin. Many people fail to get anything from God because they do not really consecrate their money. There are doubtless thousands of people professing to be entirely consecrated who do not know the first principles of consecration as shown in their death-like clutch upon their money. Here is a sample—a man who claimed that he had given all to God, and yet reserved a part to himself.

Why did Ananias act this way? Peter says, "Satan filled thine heart." Satan filled his heart with sin. Here then we learn the origin of depravity. It comes from Satan. He fills men's hearts with sin. Some people have tried to excuse man's depraved nature by saying God made him thus. But God never created anything sinful. Jesus says in the parable of the tares, "An enemy hath done this." Satan filled Adam with a carnal nature and through Adam the whole race, and he adds to this filling when men consent to it—an added depravity. Here we learn too that sin is the work of Satan (1 Jno. 3:8).

"To lie to the Holy Ghost." Notice the Holy Ghost is a person—not an influence—to whom lies may be told. Of all the self-deceit in the world the worst is to think we can lie to God and he not know it. We can sometimes deceive man, but never God, and yet men keep right on lying to him. The only party they deceive is themselves. The vows of entire consecration are not made to men or the church, but God, as here. It is most serious business to vow to God and keep anything back.

Peter reasons with him thus, "Why hast thou conceived this in thy heart?" Here we get light on the workings of depravity. Satan filled the heart of Ananias and then with this seed in his heart he conceived the outward act or profession of spurious consecration. To conceive means to take up with. He worked the evil out that Satan put in. Some work out the salvation that God puts into their lives and others the sin that they allow Satan to put in.

When Peter had spoken these words, Ananias fell dead. It was

not Peter's words, but God, who killed him. Peter must not therefore be criticized and it is hazardous in the extreme to criticize what God does. God is taking men every day—sometimes in judgment, sometimes in mercy, and when he takes sinners in judgment it is only a few days before their allotted time, which is short at the longest. God has a special loathing for covetous people (Psalm 10:3); especially if they are his professed followers. Achan, Judas and Ananias are illustrations of this fact. He removed Ananias as a warning, but his eternal destiny is infinitely worse than his physical death. So they buried him according to the usual custom, the same day of his death.

It is evident that religious services were of great length in those days, for three hours later his wife Sapphira came to the assembly and told the same lie. It is a sad thing when two people conspire to do evil, especially a husband and wife. Hypocrisy is the worst of all sins. It is insidious, and dangerous because it is insidious.

Again the sacred writer tells of the condition of the church as he did in Chapter 2:41-47; 4:31-35. He especially mentions as he has already four times, that they were "of one accord." (See Chap. 1:14; 2:1, 46; Ch. 4:24.) Thank God there is harmony in a Spirit-filled church that is lasting.

There might seem to be a discrepancy between the statement in vs. 13 that "there durst no man join them" and the statement in verse 14 that "believers were the more added to the Lord." But it means that no man of the sort of Ananias and Sapphira dared join them. But believers were added the more to the Lord (not to the church) because God had showed his disciplining hand. Discipline makes the body of Christ respected and makes it attractive. There were *multitudes*, because, then as now, religious life ebbs and flows in current. *Men*, because the strong in their pride were bowed down; *women*, because the gospel both owns and elevates and enfranchises women." (Abbott.)

The outside people—not the believers—brought out their sick and in their superstitious credulity thought that if the shadow of Peter fell on them, they would be healed. The record does not say they were healed. God never healed people after that fashion anywhere in the Bible. We believe Peter healed all that were brought

to him. (See verse 12.) We do not doubt that by a faith in Peter's shadow some were healed by the power of the mind or "the mind cure." But there was no virtue in his shadow.

#### THE RESULTS OF GENUINE CONSECRATION. Vs. 17-42.

17 Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,

18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.

19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,

20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

21 And when they heard *that*, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,

23 Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.

24 Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.

25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.

26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.

27 And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council: and the high priest asked them,

28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

29 Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and *so is* also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

33 When they heard *that*, they were cut *to the heart*, and took counsel to slay them.

34 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;

35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.

36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.

37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, *even* as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

We have shown the results of spurious consecration as illustrated in the experience of Ananias and Sapphira. We now notice the results of genuine consecration as illustrated in the experience of the apostles. We see the boldness and spiritual triumphs it brought and also the opposition that it stirred up. This is but the history of every spiritual revival and onward aggressive movement. Our consecration will be tested by the opposition we shall surely meet.

So the high-priest and all that were with him, who were Sadducees—the infidels of that day—became exceedingly angry. Is it not astonishing that men get angry when good is being done? Here were many being healed of different diseases and getting salvation. If we did not know the nature of the carnal mind, we would be astonished to see men get angry at good deeds. But so it is. “The carnal mind is enmity against God.” It hates to see the works of God. The angry high priest had the apostles put into prison over night, intending to bring them into court in the morning. But God is on the side of his persecuted children. If entire consecration brings the opposition of the carnal mind, it also brings the assistance of God. As a mother takes the part of the child whom



the other children torment, so God looks after his little ones, and here he sends his angel to bring them out of prison. This deliverance increased their boldness in the court next morning. A good cause always prospers best when persecuted. If the modern church only had something about or in it worth persecuting, it would thrive much better spiritually. The word angel means a messenger. God has his messengers to help his people. Arnot says, "The angel opened the prison, and carried to the prisoners the Master's message, that they should continue to preach the gospel; but the angel himself does not preach. You never find an angel calling on sinners to repent." The angel commanded them to go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this immortal life, obtained by the resurrection of Jesus. Would not the angels be glad to have the opportunity to preach salvation that we mortals have! And so they began preaching in the temple very early in the morning. When the court assembled to try these men and sent officers to bring them into court, they found they were not there. The officers reported that the prison doors were locked and the guards before the doors, but the prisoners were escaped. Now consternation seizes the hierarchy. They were troubled and perplexed. This circumstance, in connection with the miracles already performed by the apostles alarmed the high priest and his party. To add to their confusion, some one came and reported that the apostles were at that very moment preaching in the temple, and were not trying to escape. So the temple police went to the temple and brought them without violence to the court room. They feared the people so that they treated them gently. The truth is more attractive to the common people than to ungodly ecclesiasticism. Jesus and apostles were very popular with the common people.

Set before the council, they were asked, "Did we not command you not to teach in this name?" They call it "this name." They did not *speak* the name of Jesus. For some reason they did not like to pronounce it. Ecclesiasticism always likes to boss other people, and lord it over God's heritage. The same spirit is in modern ungodly ecclesiasticism, although it is not so powerful as in those days.

They charged the apostles with filling Jerusalem with their

doctrine or teaching. That is all Jerusalem was stirred by their teaching. Poor misguided ecclesiastics! They thought they had got rid of Jesus and his cause, but found that it is stronger than when he was on earth. Persecution always helps the cause of God.

Their enemies also charged them with the intention of making the people believe they were guilty of the crucifixion of their Messiah. So they say, "you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." There were only two alternatives. The blood must come upon them as guilty of the crucifixion of Jesus (for they had said, "His blood be upon us." Matt. 27:25) or it must come upon them to save them from their sins. It came upon them as punishment or salvation. They refused the salvation and so condemnation did come upon them for shedding that precious blood.

Genuine consecration gives boldness.<sup>1</sup> The man who has really given himself to God, fears nothing when in the line of duty. So Peter answers boldly, "We ought to obey God rather than man." Is this the same Peter who a few weeks ago had denied his master, frightened by a servant girl? Yes, the same, and yet not the same. He had received the fullness of the Spirit at Pentecost, and the carnal mind, the cause of fear, had been destroyed. (Acts 15:9.) Now he fears no one. Abbott thus outlines the address of this consecrated, Spirit-filled man, "The address that follows is almost in the nature of a syllogism; its logic is unanswerable. (1) We ought to obey God rather than man. (2) Israel's God had raised and exalted Jesus, whom ye slew. (3) By direct commission and by the impartation of the Holy Ghost we are directed to bear witness of these truths."

Note the contrast: *God* raised up Jesus, but *ye* slew him and disgraced him whom God exalted.

This Jesus, God exalted, who is a Prince and Saviour. The reason that God exalted him was two-fold. (1) To give repentance. We have already shown (Ch. 3:19) that repentance is a change of mind toward sin. God gives this change of mind. The human heart is totally depraved. That is, it is so far in the dark that man would never have any desire to be saved if God did not put the desire in his heart and the disposition to turn from sin. (2) Remission of sins. This not only means forgiveness, but also the cleansing of the soul from sin.

Then the apostles boldly declared that they were witnesses of these things (or words it may be translated). Let us try to take into account the surroundings. Probably such a speech had never before been made. It was the highest council of the Jews, who were here told by these men that they were witnesses of the life, death, resurrection of Jesus and salvation from all sin. This is the first testimony of this kind in such a place ever recorded. How many millions since that time have testified to the power of Jesus to save from all sin. Jesus had told them they should witness (Luke 24:47-48). He also says (no doubt Peter was spokesman) that the Holy Spirit also was a witness with them. This is exactly in harmony with what Jesus had said in John 15:26-27. The Holy Spirit had borne witness in two ways—by the signs and miracles he had wrought through them, and also by an internal witnessing to the souls of the apostles. “Both kinds of testimony are included here and on these three kinds of evidence Christianity rests. (1) *Historical and human*, the testimony of credible witnesses to the life, character and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. (2) *Divine and external*, the evidence afforded by moral and spiritual changes in individuals and the community accounted for only by the presence of God’s spirit. (3) *Divine and internal*, the inward realization of the Spirit of God in the heart of the believer.”

Peter’s address was just what might have been expected in fulfillment of the promise of Jesus. The latter had said, “But when they deliver you up take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.” (Matt. 10:19-20.) So here we have a speech coming directly from the Holy Spirit and it is a model worth our study. Notice it was brief. It contained only three sentences. This will be an encouragement to those whose efforts are short. God can speak through short talks as well as those that are lengthy. It was compact and complete. It contains the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, as king and Savior, and the repentance, forgiveness and cleansing that he gives, and the witness of the Spirit and the duty and privilege of saved people to be witnesses. The sturdy courage of the apostles also per-

meates it. This short speech contains all the essentials of the gospel of Jesus. It has been called the "true apostles' creed." It also gives the conditions of receiving the Holy Spirit. He is given to those who *obey God*.

The result of this sermon upon the audience is seen in the phrase, "They were cut to the heart." The word heart is not in the original. The correct translation is, "They were sawn asunder." When the Holy Spirit convicted the hearers of Peter it says, "They were pricked to the heart" (Acts 2:37) and yielded at once. They felt pain of conscience and sought relief, crying, "What must we do?" But here instead of yielding to the pricking of the truth they resented it and were sawn asunder by it (See a similar instance in Acts 7:54) and they were angry, and sought to kill the apostles. If we did not know the nature of the carnal mind, would it not seem strange that men want to kill others for opinion's sake? But there was one shrewd member of the council by the name of Gamaliel. Without doubt he had heard and been moved by the teachings of Jesus and had perhaps been favorably impressed, but did not dare to become his follower. He was a Pharisee and contended earnestly for the doctrine of the Resurrection against the infidel Sadducees, and to allow the Sadducees to condemn these men for preaching the Resurrection would be a blow at the fundamental doctrine of Phariseism. (The high priest was a Sadducee.) So he made this adroit suggestion. Gamaliel was a very popular man, being a great teacher, and his suggestion was adopted. It was a stroke of policy on the part of a man who was convinced of much of the beauty of Jesus' teachings, but had not the moral courage to take an open stand for them. He was much like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, who helped anoint and bury the body of Jesus.

Gamaliel was one of the greatest public teachers of the day. He was the first to receive the title of Raban, and his advice had great weight. So the council agreed to the proposition in part. They let the disciples go, but they whipped them first, and commanded them to speak no more in the name of Jesus. This was their great offense—speaking in the name of Jesus. For speaking in the name of the one whom they had condemned as a criminal was a reproach to the council, who condemned him.

So the disciples departed not whining, or complaining, but rejoicing because they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus. They did not desist from preaching or teaching, but kept at it daily. This is true consecration, that cannot be frightened from duty.



## CHAPTER VI.

### THE SPIRIT-FILLED CHURCH.

A Spirit-filled Church Settles Differences in a Harmonious Manner. Vs. 1-7. The Spirit Develops Talent. Vs. 8-10. Such a Church Brings upon Itself Persecution. Vs. 11-15.

A SPIRIT-FILLED CHURCH SETTLES DIFFICULTIES IN A HARMONIOUS MANNER. Vs. 1-7.

1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.

2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:

6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid *their* hands on them.

7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Human nature is the same in all ages of the world, and the Holy Ghost does the same work in the heart in all ages when he comes in his fullness; and the hostility of the carnal mind is also the same. We shall therefore be enabled to learn some lessons if we study the experiences and history of this Spirit-filled church. The church has now greatly multiplied. The church was made up of two classes—Hebrews and Greeks. Doubtless these Greeks

were proselytes, who had embraced the Mosaic religion before they were converted, for the Hebrew law permitted this. Here was an opportunity to have a quarrel, and a split. How many good causes have been killed or hampered by differences that have led to quarrel and division. The point of difficulty was that the Hebrew widows were helped in their necessity from the common charitable fund, spoken of in Chap. 2:44, but the Grecian widows had been neglected. This took place probably because the situation was new (there was no special provision under the Mosaic law for assisting widows), and partly from a lack of system. The church was new and new too at the business of looking after the poor. In Eastern countries a widow is very helpless. She is the prey of the lawless, who contrive all sorts of methods to get her property, since she has no defender. So here was a race problem. And a race problem is usually an ugly one. Race prejudice is a manifestation of carnality. It was right for the Greeks to see that their poor were looked after and call attention to it. But it would have been wrong to let it go unsettled until they backslid on both sides and had a division. If people in this day would settle their difficulties immediately, how much damage to the cause of God might be avoided. The Pentecostal church attended to it *at once* and kept the unity of the Spirit. It is easier to prevent trouble than to settle it after it has occurred. So the twelve apostles called the church together and said, "We will quit trying to look after the temporalities of the church and let some one who is not called to the public ministry of the word attend to that. Here is the authority for giving laymen office in the church, to look after the temporalities. In a church filled with the Holy Spirit, the laymen will not burden the preacher with having to look after the finances.

These men who were to serve on the "official board of the church" were to have three qualifications. (1) "Of honest report." They were to be not merely honest men, but men whom the people believed to be honest. The men who carry on the finances of a church ought to be above suspicion, else the people will be backward about giving their money and the cause will be hindered. The same is true of any other church official. Paul says a bishop must be "of good report of them which are



without." (2) "Full of the Holy Ghost." This comes first and wisdom second. In the Pentecostal church wealth did not count. There was no such thing and is no such thing in a pentecostal church today as a worldly "church boss" controlling God's spiritual kingdom and cause. Men were not sought to carry on church offices because they had money. (3) "Wisdom." They were not only to have a good reputation and a sanctified heart, but also to have wisdom. Not every good man is fit for every office in the church. And a holy man will not sulk because some one else is put into office. A man may be good and yet not be great. When a man is found with these three qualities, a good reputation, a good experience and a good faculty for business, he is a most valuable man for any church or community to have.

Notice the reason that the apostles wanted these deacons or assistants appointed—that they might have time for two things—(1) prayer. Having to spend so much time "serving tables," helping the poor, they had little time for prayer. It says, "prayer and to the ministry of the Word." They put prayer first and the ministry of the word second. Prayer in their estimation was of more importance than preparing sermons. It is not so considered in these days. If it were we should have schools to teach our young people how to pray as well as schools to teach them how to preach. Why should there not be schools for prayer as well as for Bible study? Prayer is the great business of the preacher, according to this. (2) "The ministry of the word." The apostles believed in having time to properly minister the word. They could not do it properly when harassed with other cares. Those who make a specialty of presenting the word should have a special time for special preparation of this specialty.

This saying pleased everybody. And so the matter which seemed about to cause trouble was harmoniously adjusted by the apostles turning it over to the church themselves, instead of trying to be "lords over God's heritage." (See 1 Peter 5:3.) How different this from the Roman Catholic method of having the clergy rule. It is noticeable that the men the church chose had Greek names, thus indicating that they were Greeks. Thus the Grecians who had made the complaint were allowed to administer the money.

Stephen is the first name, and his character is especially mentioned, we suppose, because he was so soon to become conspicuous by martyrdom. All the others were full of the Holy Ghost as well, according to verse 3. Stephen and Philip are the only two especially mentioned afterwards. It does not follow that God will make a leader of us like Stephen and Philip if we are full of the Holy Ghost. He will qualify us for our place in life, however. It says of Stephen that he was "full of faith and the Holy Ghost." It says of Barnabas in Chapter 11 that he was "full of the Holy Ghost and faith;" the qualities are reversed. A man could not be filled with one and not be filled with the other.

When the church had chosen these men for deacons or assistants they set them before the apostles, who ordained them by the laying on of hands. This is the first instance in the New Testament of the form of ordination, although virtually the same thing had been practiced in the Old Testament. (See Gen. 48:14.) It is the formal outward expression of the blessing imparted by God and the church to those who are proper candidates. Some go through the form but get nothing because they are not in the will of God, nor qualified in heart to receive spiritual blessing.

Now that the opposers had relaxed their opposition by the advice of Gamaliel, the cause began to get in favor with the people, and there were many converts and among them a great company of priests. But this did not continue long. Our holy religion is nothing if it does not attack sin. It is salt. It will attack every form of corruption in its neighborhood. Some people fail to comprehend this, and talk of preaching holiness in such a way as to create no opposition. As soon think of a red hot iron causing no opposition when thrust into cold water. It is in the nature of holiness to attack error and it would not be holiness if it did not. So for awhile holiness was popular. It always is when taken on its own merits and when it does not conflict with the sins of mankind. But it was now to have the first real conflict with Phariseeism. It has had many since that time. Phariseeism was and is today the greatest foe of holiness. (See verses 11-15 and Chapter 7.)

## THE SPIRIT DEVELOPS TALENT IN SUCH A CHURCH.

Vs. 8-10.

8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

9 Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called *the synagogue* of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.

10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

Whenever the Spirit of God fills a church membership, it is wonderful how the gifts and talents latent in men are developed. There probably never was a general, genuine revival that did not raise up preachers, and other workers. When a denomination runs short of preachers it is because it has lost the Holy Spirit. When a church cannot find class leaders and Sunday School teachers, it has lost the Spirit. So we see in this Spirit-filled church, Stephen raised up and his natural gift of preaching which had been latent, set on fire, so that his adversaries could not resist his wisdom. Stephen was a Greek, not a Hebrew, and his enemies the Pharisees were doubtless all the more enraged because of that fact. He seems to get a better glimpse under the Spirit's illumination of the radical, revolutionary character of Christianity than Peter, the Hebrew, yet "the careful student will find in Stephen's plea the germs of the doctrines of universal sin and universal grace of which Paul became the most distinguished exponent and which, I believe, he learned from the martyred Stephen. Though his address only inculcates what Christ taught in his first sermon (Luke 4:21-27) by a similar historical argument, it marks the practical transition of Christianity from a reformation of Judaism to a world-wide religion, and is thus almost the most important of the speeches reported in the Book of Acts."

## SUCH A CHURCH BRINGS UPON ITSELF PERSECUTION.

Vs. 11-15.

11 Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and *against* God.

12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon *him*, and caught him, and brought *him* to the council,

13 And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law :

14 For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.

15 And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

We may say all we please about being so good and holy, and preaching the doctrine so judiciously as not to offend, but let us not forget that the Bible describes the nature of sin and holiness by saying, "All they that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." The devil will not leave a flourishing genuinely holy church alone. These opposers could not answer Stephen's argument, so they resort to persecution. When men have to resort to persecution, calling names and personal abuse, it is because they have no argument and this has been quite often the case in opposing holiness. So these depraved Libertines and Alexandrians formed a conspiracy by finding false witnesses to accuse Stephen of uttering blasphemy. It was an unjust charge. We sometimes say when we see the unjust attacks and false charges made against holiness that people use unfair methods, and so they do. It is one of the traits of the carnal mind. Truth rarely has a fair treatment. Notice that Jesus received similar treatment. Stephen was accused of saying that Jesus would destroy Jerusalem. Jesus was accused of declaring that he would destroy the temple. Stephen's speech doubtless was a statement of the new religion that was to change the old order of things and reform Judaism and they distorted it as people usually do who fight the truth. It is difficult to fairly and candidly quote an enemy.

The best thing of the whole business was that Stephen had the indwelling Spirit that shone out of his face. God puts a shine on the faces of his saints today who really have the holy fire in their hearts. John the Baptist was a burning and a shining light. He had to burn before he shone. So will we. There is an unearthly radiance in a person who is really filled with the Holy Ghost.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A HOLY MAN'S DEFENCE.

It Is Scriptural. Vs. 1-50. Attacks Sin. Vs. 51-53. The Result.  
Vs. 54-60.

#### IT IS SCRIPTURAL. Vs. 1-50.

1 Then said the high priest, Are these things so?

2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,

3 And said unto him, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.

4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldæans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.

5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not *so much as* to set his foot on; yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when *as yet* he had no child.

6 And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat *them* evil four hundred years.

7 And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place.

8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so *Abraham* begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac *begat* Jacob; and Jacob *begat* the twelve patriarchs.

9 And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him,

10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.

11 Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance.

12 But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first.

13 And at the second *time* Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh.

14 Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to *him*, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls.

15 So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers,

16 And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor *the father* of Sychem.

17 But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,

18 Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.

19 The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.

20 In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months :

21 And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son.

22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.

23 And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.

24 And seeing one of *them* suffer wrong, he defended *him*, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian :

25 For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them : but they understood not.

26 And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren ; why do ye wrong one to another ?

27 But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us ?

28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday ?

29 Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons.

30 And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.

31 When Moses saw *it*, he wondered at the sight : and as he drew near to behold *it*, the voice of the Lord came unto him,

32 *Saying*, I *am* the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.

33 Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet : for the place where thou standest is holy ground.

34 I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.

35 This Moses whom they refused saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge ? the same did God send to *be* a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.

36 He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

37 This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.

38 This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and *with* our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust *him* from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,

40 Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for *as for* this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.

42 Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices *by the space* of forty years in the wilderness?

43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen.

45 Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David;

46 Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

47 But Solomon built him an house.

48 Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet,

49 Heaven *is* my throne, and earth *is* my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what *is* the place of my rest?

50 Hath not my hand made all these things?

By consulting the preceding chapter we shall see that Stephen had been charged by false witnesses with having blasphemed, and had been brought before the Jewish council for trial. He does not apparently defend himself, but makes it an opportunity to preach the truth to them. Notice his address is almost wholly composed of Scripture. He does not confine himself to exact Scripture quotations, but narrates Hebrew history. He keeps on with his scriptural quotations until he comes to verse 37, which

shows that Moses prophesied of Jesus. He thus shows them, that in rejecting Jesus, they were also rejecting Moses. And the approval of Moses whom they believed establishes the Messiahship of Jesus. And Stephen was not guilty after all of blasphemy in preaching Jesus, whom their own Moses had foretold. Thus he preached the Gospel, shows how it is related to Judaism and defends himself at the same time. For the deity and Messiahship of Jesus being established, the charges against Stephen fall to the ground. Let us look more closely at the sermon.

He begins by telling them that the God of glory (the God who appeared in the glory of Shechinah. Ex. 40:34) appeared to Abraham, the founder of their church, when he dwelt in Mesopotamia. He describes the divine command to Abraham to leave his native land and go to Canaan; that God would not give him even a place to plant his feet, and yet promised it to him and his descendants as a future possession, when as yet he had no children. So he goes on telling of the selling of Joseph into Egypt, the famine and the removal of Jacob and family into Egypt and the oppression of Israel by Pharaoh; their deliverance by Moses; the prophecy of Moses concerning the Messiah; the backslidings of Israel; the establishment of the nation; the building of the temple. But God had been worshipped before the temple was built. "The worship of God went on under Moses, Joshua, Samuel and David, before the temple was built; how could the destruction of the temple be a destruction of true worship, or Stephen's prophecy of its destruction be accounted blasphemy against God?" This is Stephen's argument against the charge of Chapter 6, Verse 14. A long argument, but irrefutable. We learn from this that holy people have the right to defend themselves.

#### IT ATTACKS SIN. Vs. 51-53.

51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye.

52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:

53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*.



Some people have misinterpreted holiness and seem to think it is wholly passive and mild and lets evil go unprotested; that it is a kind of sweetish disposition without any iron in the blood, or backbone, and if they hear error attacked or Phariseeism, they cry, "Sour holiness." But Stephen was a man *filled* with the Holy Ghost and *wisdom*, too, and he attacked Phariseeism. So a man may be holy and yet be a rebuker of sin. He calls them "stiff-necked." The reference is to an ox who is stubborn and refuses to bend his neck when the attempt is made to put on the yoke. These people were stubborn and refused to yield to the truth. He also calls them "uncircumcised in heart and ears." Circumcision in the Bible is the type of entire sanctification, when the heart is circumcised the principle of carnality is removed and our love is made perfect. Uncircumcision of heart is the heart with the carnal nature or in other words, the carnal heart. When a man's heart is carnal, the ears of his soul are also carnal. He cannot comprehend or understand spiritual truth. That is the reason so many fail to see holiness in the Bible. Their ears are uncircumcised.

These people always resisted the Holy Ghost, and so did their fathers. Here we have several truths brought out. We see here that the Holy Spirit is a person, whose operations may be resisted. In Chapter V, Ananias lied to him. These people resisted him. The fathers of these people as well as themselves resisted the Spirit. This shows that the Holy Spirit worked on human hearts in the Old Dispensation. So we learn that the Holy Ghost worked to some extent in the Old Testament Dispensation, though not to that extent that he works now in this dispensation which is preeminently his.

"Which of the prophets have not your fathers slain?" Notice the difference. He began his speech with *our* father Abraham. He says in verse 44, "*Our* father," but now says "*Your* fathers." He separates himself from their association. He does not belong to that unspiritual class in the church that seeks in all ages to kill those who are true ambassadors of God. Their father was the devil and Stephen did not belong to that family. Jesus made the same distinction where he said, "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the deeds of your father ye will do." Their an-

cestors had slain the prophets who foretold the advent of the Just One, the Messiah, and they had imitated their fathers and slain the Just One himself. This council were the *betrayers* of Jesus a few weeks before by assisting Judas in his betrayal of Jesus, and his murderers by inciting Pilate to unjustly crucify him, and urging the mob to cry, "Crucify him." Both Judas and Pilate were the tools of this council.

He then makes the accusation that they had "received the law by the disposition of angels and had not kept it." The Jews believed that when God gave the law to Moses, a great company of angels gave the law to Moses. Josephus tells us that Herod, in an address to the Jews, said, "We have learned from God the most excellent of our doctrines and the most holy part of our law, by angels as ambassadors." There are several passages of Scripture that teach this. In the Septuagint version of the Old Testament in Deut. 33:2, describing the giving of the law, the passage "from his right hand went a fiery law," is translated, "on his right hand angels with him." In Psalms 68:17 is, "The chariots of the Lord are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels. The Lord is among them as in Sinai, the holy place." See also Gal. 3:19 and Heb. 1:2. He hits them hard again by saying, "and have not kept it." They gloried in the law of God and Stephen accuses them of not keeping the law in which they gloried.

#### THE RESULT. Vs. 54-60.

54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with *their* teeth.

55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son-of-man standing on the right hand of God.

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

58 And cast *him* out of the city, and stoned *him*: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *God*, and saying Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

“When they heard these things they were cut to the heart.” For the difference between the two expressions “pricked to the heart” and “cut to the heart,” see our comments on Chapter 2:37 and Chapter 5:33. The literal translation is “they were sawed asunder.” The Holy Spirit accompanied the message of this Spirit-filled man and convicted his hearers. People who resist the Holy Spirit and fight against him, usually fight his messengers. So when people are angry with us for declaring the truth, it is because they are angry with him who inspires and sends us as his messengers. They “gnashed upon him with their teeth.” When men grind their teeth with rage it is because they are very angry. Jesus says there will be gnashing of the teeth in hell. Men will have the same rage in hell that they have on earth. Our moral condition will be the same in both worlds. As death leaves us eternity will receive us.

But what did Stephen care for the rage of his enemies or the showers of stones. He was full of the Holy Ghost. When a man is thus filled nothing can daunt him. God filled the martyrs of old time with the Holy Ghost and they died amidst the cracklings of the fires in holy triumph, without seeming to mind the agony and pains of the flames. This man filled with the Holy Ghost looked clear into heaven before he got there. We have heard of dying men in these days, filled with the Holy Ghost, who looked into heaven. He no longer saw the council, for he saw the glory of God and Jesus. When a man sees these, he loses sight of all enemies and opposition. If you whine because of opposition, it is because you do not see the glory of God. “Since my eyes were fixed on Jesus, I’ve lost sight of all beside.”

He testified that he saw “Jesus standing at the right hand of God.” No wonder it enraged their wicked natures to have this Jesus, whom they had crucified, now brought to their thought. They thought they had got rid of Jesus, and here was a man declaring that he was standing at the right hand of God. Jesus is usually represented as *sitting* at the right hand of God. But here he is represented as arising to welcome the first martyr of the Pentecostal church. “Stephen under accusation of blaspheming

the earthly temple, is granted a sight of the heavenly temple; being cited before the Sadducaic high priest, who believed neither angel nor spirit, he is vouchsafed a vision of the heavenly high priest, standing and ministering at the throne, amidst the angels and spirits of just men made perfect." (Alford.) He calls Jesus "The Son of Man." This is the same title that Jesus had given himself when he was tried before the same council. (Matt. 26:64.) Jesus is called the Son of Man because he was the ideal man—the second Adam. He is so human that he is touched with the feelings of our infirmities. And this human Son of Man is before the throne to plead for us. This revelation shows how near the spirit world is to us. His hearers did not wait to pass a judicial sentence. The council broke up into a mob and killed him. It was really the only way they could do it, as the Roman government had taken away the power to execute criminals. Stoning was the especial punishment for the crime of blasphemy. (Lev. 24:14.) Paul tells the mob later (Acts 22:18) that he was present and held the raiment of those who stoned Stephen. So Paul was the young man here called Saul. He took the clothes for safe keeping. The Sanhedrim gave this Saul a commission later to persecute all Christians. (Chapter 9:1-2.)

So this first martyr died, "calling upon God"—not on any saint or the Virgin Mary. Being filled with the Holy Ghost, of course he prayed to the right parties. So he made no mistake in the matter. He did not imagine he saw Jesus. It was real. A man full of the Holy Ghost would describe things correctly.

Notice his two-fold prayer. It was (1) "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," and (2) "Lay not this sin to their charge." This was similar to the dying prayer of Jesus. (Luke 23:34-46.) Some people have asserted that Stephen was angry when he accused the council of being stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears. But his dying prayer proves that he was not. Holy people are often accused of being angry when their message angers other people. The phrase, "Lay not this sin to their charge," should be translated, "Weigh not against them, this sin." "When thou, the Judge of all, weighest their actions in thy balance, do not place this sin in the scale against them." Saul as the record tells us later, evidently was put under convic-

tion by the triumphant death of Stephen. And this prayer of Stephen was evidently heard and answered in Saul's conversion.

This man filled with the Spirit and calmly commending his spirit into the hands of the Lord Jesus, is a death blow to the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory that the soul must go through with its torturing fires. A man full of the Holy Ghost needs no purgatory to purify him. The blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses from all sin is all the purgatory that we need and all that there is. And so the first Christian martyr died like his Lord in holy triumph. "He fell asleep." Death is likened to a sleep in all ages and by writers of all kinds—both religious and secular.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### PERSECUTION HELPS THE CAUSE.

The Persecution. Vs. 1-4. The Persecution Helped Samaria. Vs. 5-24. The Persecution Helped Ethiopia. Vs. 25-40.

#### THE PERSECUTION. Vs. 1-4.

1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles.

2 And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial*, and made great lamentation over him.

3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed *them* to prison.

4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

The church had settled down in its nest having a delightful, easy time. The influence of the apostles and the church had been greatly augmented by the healing of the lame man. Great numbers were joining the ranks of the apostles. The work had even spread among the priesthood, and a great number of them had been converted. Christianity was becoming very popular. If they had had their way the disciples would have remained at Jerusalem and the cause would have died there of dry rot. But Christianity is an aggressive religion. Holiness is salt and will attack the corruption in its neighborhood. If it remains popular for too long a time in the neighborhood of sin something is decidedly wrong with it. When holiness first sounds its message in a community in these days there are many who misunderstand it and take sides at once against it, thinking it fanaticism. They circulate false stories, saying its advocates claim that they can not sin, or be tempted, etc. After these errors are dispelled, it becomes popular for a time, until men begin to see that it means

death to the carnal mind and that it costs a complete sacrifice of themselves. Then the war begins. The Pentecostal church had reached this stage. Ungodly ecclesiasticism proposed to stamp it out. The war was on. Stephen led in the battle and sealed his testimony with his blood. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." All good causes flourish best when most persecuted. This is the teaching of history. The fierce persecutions of the church kept it from settling down in Jerusalem, but scattered it all over the known world. It was like scattering a fire. Like fire brands, they set new fires everywhere they went.

Saul is especially mentioned here because after he held the clothes of the dying Stephen, he led in the persecution of the church. Luke (the writer) also mentions it because he wants his readers to be more fully prepared to appreciate the great change wrought in Saul when he was converted. (See Chapter IX.) Saul was "consenting" to the death of Stephen. It reads in the Greek, "Saul was taking pleasure in the death of Stephen." He thought he was doing God service (Acts 24:16) and so it gave him pleasure to see Stephen, whom he esteemed a blasphemer, put to death.

No doubt the mob having killed Stephen, became bloodthirsty and began to break up and disperse the meetings of the disciples. Consequently the leaders all fled except the twelve apostles, who remained at Jerusalem. No doubt the twelve remained at Jerusalem because they did not consider the persecution as anything but temporary.

Devout men carried Stephen to his burial and made great lamentation over him. No doubt they thought the cause was overthrown because their most brilliant orator had been put to death. But "God buries his workmen but carries the work on." A young man destined to be the greatest religious leader the world ever saw was convicted by the death and testimony of Stephen, and was not able to throw the conviction off. How wonderfully God carries his work on! When the cause again and again seems overthrown, new vigor comes out of the defeat. So when leaders in the cause die let us not be discouraged. God is more interested to raise up leaders than we possibly can be.

But Saul raged like a wild animal. That is the original mean-



ing of the words "Made havock." He even entered private houses in his zeal to hunt out those whom he considered heretics. He never did things by halves. He was determined to stamp out this sect of Nazarenes. But the scattered church preached everywhere they went. They had an experience that they told everywhere. Real salvation is an experience too big to keep to one's self.

#### THE PERSECUTION HELPED SAMARIA. Vs. 5-24.

5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed *with them*: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

8 And there was great joy in that city.

9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:

10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.

11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.

12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

17 Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter : for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and *in* the bond of iniquity.

24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

It helped other places, of course, as they went preaching everywhere, but we have in this chapter the specific account of its helpfulness in Samaria and Ethiopia. We must call to remembrance what Samaria was in order to fully understand and appreciate the account of deacon Philip's revival there. By reading John 4:9 we find that the Jews and Samaritans were not on good terms. They were a mixed race of Jews and heathen. They thought they had the true religion and that God could be worshipped only in their temples on Mt. Gerizim. By reading John 4:25 we find that they believed that the Messiah would come. Jesus had a great revival there (See John 4) about six years before this, so they were ready to receive Philip. It will be noticed that the gospel did spread exactly as Jesus had said, "in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." (Acts 1:8.) It went in that exact order. It came next (and now) to Samaria after it had been preached in Jerusalem and Judea.

Philip had a two-fold influence upon them—in his message concerning the Messiah and in the signs and wonders which he wrought. Now resulted a genuine revival as may be clearly proved. By verse 12 it is seen that they believed and were baptized as a profession of their faith and there was great joy in that city. (Vs. 8.) These are certainly the characteristics of a genuine revival. If these people were not in a saved condition, whoever was in such a condition?

There was an eminent sorcerer in the city by the name of Simon. He had performed many tricks and feats of jugglery, and had excited the wonder of the people, but had not "bewitched" them, as the Authorized Version puts it. He professed to be a great man and the people thought so too. As the revival swept on and many were saved, Simon also believed. He thought Philip was

in league with some strong spirit, and he wanted to join the league. Probably there never was a large revival that did not take in some who make a mere outward profession, from the wrong motives. Who fail to understand the nature of true religion. Then they are taken into the church and help load it down. That is one great reason why we need to preach very searching sermons on the different phases of real salvation. And it is one reason why so many church members fight holiness—they have never been regenerated. So Simon was baptized and joined himself to Philip as an assistant probably. Note another proof that it was a genuine revival. The apostles at Jerusalem heard “that Samaria had received the Word of God.” It was generally understood by the church that it was a genuine work of grace.

When the apostles heard of this revival they sent Peter and John to Samaria that these people who had already believed and had been baptized might receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. So we see that they were not sinners but believers. Sinners are not eligible to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. This passage alone ought to forever silence those who say we “get all there is at conversion.” A careful study of the New Testament will show that there was always in that day a second work of confirmation that the church insisted upon after a company of people had been converted. The *form* of it still remains in the definite administration of the rite of confirmation in the Roman Catholic and Episcopal churches of today. Confirmation on Easter is the fossil remains of what was once the form of receiving the definite experience of entire sanctification. It was and is always administered to those *who have already been baptized and are recognized as Christians*. It is strange that any should deny the second work, entire sanctification, with an open Bible. Those who wish to study the matter of confirmation still farther, should read the passages which show that Paul in his second visits to churches, went for the purpose of confirming them. (See Acts 14:22; 15:41; 18:23; 2 Cor. 1:15.) A careful study of the rite of confirmation in the Roman Catholic Church, which is the backslidden church of Pentecost, will show the essential features of the second blessing. It is publicly stated in the performance of this rite that the candidate receives the power to become “a perfect Christian.”

The bishop anoints the forehead of the candidate with oil, which is the symbol of the Holy Spirit and his work.

When Peter and John had come to these converts, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost. Here we learn that it is right and Scriptural to pray for people that they may receive the Holy Ghost. This was nothing more essentially than the same kind of a service as a modern Altar Service for seekers of entire sanctification, for a careful study of Acts 15:9 shows that in receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, the heart is purified. So here we have Scriptural warrant for the modern Holiness Movement and its methods. So then a person may be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus and therefore be saved and yet need to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Having prayed for these converts, the apostles laid their hands upon them and they received the Holy Ghost. We have already spoken of the laying on of hands in Chapter 6:6 (See our comments there). The Holy Ghost came on the company in the upper room, without any hands being laid upon them. So that this form is not essential.

One of the very best methods of testing the genuineness of the conversion of a church is to preach the second work of grace. It will search out those, who are not really converted. So the preaching of "the Second Blessing" often discloses who has not got the first. Simon offered the apostles money if they would give him the power to impart the Holy Ghost. The term Simony is derived from this act. It means the buying and selling of office in the church.

Peter replied, "Thy money perish with thee because thou hast thought." His thought or purpose is condemned, not the act. He had purposed in his heart. He had not performed the act. Here we learn that God condemns men for the purposes of the heart, even when they have not committed any *act* of sin. Simon thought the blessing could be bought with money. Those who think it can be obtained in any other way—either by money, struggles or good works—are like Simon. All salvation is obtained by faith. All that some people want of the Spirit today is his help. They do not desire him as a constant abiding guest. They just want him for what they can get from him. It is profit with them and not

communion and fellowship. Some churches want the Holy Spirit to help them in the week of prayer or during revival meetings, but the rest of the year they do not seem to act as if there was a Holy Spirit, as they indulge in their worldly matters of entertainment and financial methods.

Peter told him that he had neither part nor lot in the Gospel. "If there is any difference in the words 'part' and 'lot,' the first indicates a part already assigned; the second, one yet to be assigned. The first then would indicate that Simon had no present portion in Christian gifts; the second, no future inheritance of the saints."

"For thy heart is not right in the sight of God." The word *right* here means *straight*. His heart was crooked. It had inbred sin. Simon's outward behavior was all right. He had been baptized, and baptized by the apostles, too. Let those religious teachers who assert that baptism regenerates or makes a man a Christian, please note that this man had been baptized in the most approved and scriptural manner, and it had not affected his heart. It was still wrong. Let those who make much of the gift of the Spirit, as power for service and little or nothing of the cleansing of the heart, note that this man did not get the gift of the Spirit because his motives were not right. Note, too, that it was "not right" in the sight of God. We may be right in the sight of men, because they can not see the heart, but we must be right in the sight of God, or we can not be accepted.

"Repent therefore of this thy wickedness." To repent here as in Chapter 3:19 means to change the mind. "If perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." We need to repent of wicked thoughts as well as wicked acts and words. Peter is not a judge of what sins the Lord will forgive, but says, "If perhaps the thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven." He likens sin to "the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity." These are expressive figures. Certainly sin is a bitter thing, and iniquity is the bond by which Satan binds the sinner. Simon asked Peter to pray for him, lest punishment fall upon him. There is no penitence in his prayer, but simply a dread of punishment. To sum up the case of Simon we see that the externals of religion, such as baptism, church membership and other outward forms, avail nothing if our hearts are not right.

## THE PERSECUTION HELPED ETHIOPIA. Vs. 25-40.

25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship.

28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

30 And Philip ran thither to *him*, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

36 And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea.

Philip is called *The Evangelist*, to distinguish him from the Apostle Philip. We have just seen how he carried the gospel into Samaria and we now see how he became the instrument in carrying

it into the continent of Africa. The apostles preached through many villages of the Samaritans. And now notice how wonderful the means used to introduce the gospel into Africa.

An angel of the Lord told Philip to go south from Jerusalem to the road that lead from Jerusalem to Gaza. This was a city in the southernmost part of Canaan (Gen. 10:19). The road led through a desert. Philip obeyed the angel and went. Later he got a communication from the Holy Spirit himself. Vs. 29. If we obey the light we first get, we will have still greater light and fuller communication. Although the place was desert, yet Philip obeyed without stopping to ask, "What will be my salary, how will I get a support in a desert? or how long will be my summer vacation?" It being a desert way, the Eunuch and Philip had better opportunity for conversation.

When Philip reached the place he found a man, the treasurer of Candace, the Queen of Ethiopia, riding in a chariot, busily engaged in reading the book of Isaiah. He was doubtless a Jewish proselyte who had been up to Jerusalem to worship. He was now returning home engaged in devout study of the Scriptures, and hungry for salvation. Let us notice more particularly some of the lessons taught here.

1. *Philip obeyed the light already given and as the result got more and clearer light.* An angel of the Lord came to him and said, "Arise and go towards the South unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert." The word angel means messenger. As those heavenly seraphim and cherubim who surround the throne of God do his bidding and carry his messages, they are called angels. God has other messengers or angels. Any one who carries his message is an angel. The messages to the seven churches of Asia, were sent to the angel or preacher of that church, for instance (See Rev. 2:1). We are to obey the message God sends to us. Philip might have said, "Lord, that is a desert place and there is no opportunity to do much there. I have just had a great revival at Samaria that swept in the whole city and now it would be a great come down to go to a desert. I am worthy of a better place. It is below my grade." It takes a good deal of grace and humility to step down into a smaller place. Few have grace enough to do it cheerfully. But if Philip had refused he

would have missed a great opportunity. Nor did he say, "How much will be my salary? Will I get any in that desert place? And how long will be my summer vacation?" Some preachers are afraid if they go to Hard scrabble that they will starve. Or they are afraid stingy people will take advantage of them if they do not fix a price. No preacher that the Lord called to preach ever starved to death. If one person is stingy, God will raise up two others in their place that will make it up. If God wants a man in the field, covetous, stingy people can not keep him out of it. Men can not upset God's plans in that way. So Philip obeyed and as he came to the road he met his audience, *one* man, and "the Spirit told him to go and join himself to the chariot." It is not the size of the congregation that counts in the sight of God. He obeyed the angel and now he gets the greater light from the Spirit. Thus obedience to light brings clearer light. 2. *God uses human agency in saving men.* This is his method. The great man was reading a book that he could not understand and needed instruction. So the truth must not only be in the Bible, but it must be voiced by human lips. God might have had an angel do it. But his method is to help man by man. So he sent Philip. Some people get so fanatical that they say they can get along without human teachers, for they have the Spirit. Well, God could have sent an angel to teach the Eunuch. Or the Spirit himself could have instructed him, but instead of that he told Philip to do it. God has given teachers as one of the spiritual gifts to his church and we must recognize them.

This has ever been the divine method. When David committed his great sin, God sent a man to him to tell him, "Thou art the man." When Saul of Tarsus was under conviction, God sent Ananias to comfort and help lead him into the light. God has committed the ministry of reconciliation of God and man to mortals. Paul says that God "hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." Truly does St. James say, "He that turneth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins." What a great work. 3. *We see the value of one soul.* Here was a man, an honest inquirer after light, and God always looks after such souls. He would give such a man more light if he had



to send Gabriel. One soul is precious in his sight. Some preachers can not preach unless they have a crowd. But the man whom God calls to preach is just as much under commission and duty to preach to a crowd of one as to a thousand. Sinners have a hard chance to get an invitation to hear the gospel in these days. The people let them alone because they say that is the duty of the preacher; he is hired to do it at so much a year. The preacher lets them alone because he feels called to preach, only when he is standing behind a pulpit of wood, and has a certain number of people before him. When he has read his little paper essay to them he feels that his commission is accomplished. Philip might have said, "Only one man! I can't preach." Some preachers leave their great sermons for the big crowd. Before a little crowd they are like a whale in shallow water. They have to be submerged in the personality of a big crowd to put forth zealous effort. Jesus Christ, the great preacher, delivered some of his best sermons to an audience of one—Nicodemus, and the woman of Samaria. So Philip went to this one soul and preached to him Jesus. This man had become puzzled over a passage in Isaiah which prophesied the sufferings of Jesus. Philip took this as a text from which to preach Jesus. So we see that the Old Testament furnishes good texts from which to preach Jesus, and get people saved. Many preachers use the Old Testament very little. So Philip ran up to the chariot and said, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" This is a good question to put to Bible readers of today. Philip did not begin his talk on the weather or the latest news. He went straight at his business. The man replied, "How can I except some man guide me?" Here was an honest inquirer and a Spirit-filled preacher. When two such come together salvation is sure to follow. A young preacher whose father was one of the chaplains of the Prince of Orange, was suddenly called by the prince to preach before him. With scarcely any preparation he took this incident of Philip and the Eunuch. He said that he found four wonders in this passage. "Wonder the *first*. A courtier reads. Wonder the *second*, a courtier reads the Bible. Wonder the *third*, a courtier owns himself ignorant of the subject. Wonder the *fourth*, a courtier applies to a minister of Christ for information, listens to his instruction and follows his counsel."

This man was reading Isaiah 53 and had come to verse 7, which perplexed him. The verse is: "He was lead as a sheep to the slaughter." This greatly puzzled the Ethiopian. He could not tell whether Isaiah spoke of himself or some one else. It was a prophecy concerning Jesus, uttered seven centuries before it was fulfilled, and so unmistakably fulfilled in the experience of Jesus that it has been a most convincing proof to many Hebrews, and has led many of them to believe on Jesus. It was so clearly fulfilled in Jesus that one infidel (Bolingbroke) undertook to explain it by the ridiculous assertion that Jesus brought about his own crucifixion so as to fulfill this prophecy. Some of the Jews have asserted that the 53d chapter of Isaiah was a prophecy concerning Titus, the Roman Emperor, who destroyed Jerusalem. But there are very many predictions in it that had nothing at all corresponding to them in the experience of Titus. In this chapter there are eleven references to the vicarious death of Jesus. So Philip opened his mouth and preached unto him Jesus. He did not preach *about* Jesus, but preached *Jesus*, with this passage as a text. He, of course, told him that faith in Jesus was the only way of salvation, and would bring salvation. He must have told him of the duty of baptism, for the man said, "Here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Here was the only one condition necessary—"If thou believest with all thy heart"—not with the head; not a belief of the creed only. This verse, while containing the true idea, has been inserted evidently by some pious copyist, as it is not in the best Greek manuscripts.

So Philip baptized him. There was no congregation present, and none is required. Oft times many modern baptisms with the curious crowd have more the form of a holiday show than of the profession of repentance and faith in the lowly Jesus.

The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip. He was gone and the Ethiopian had no occasion or temptation to worship him, nor was he there any more to receive thanks. It would be a good idea after some modern revivals if some power would take the evangelist away very quickly. The Ethiopian went on his way rejoicing. "He no more saw, nor cared to see Philip, by reason of his joy. He who has read the Scripture and Christ can now dispense with a human guide." We learn here the use God makes of the human

agent in the salvation of men. It is not enough to have the Bible and the Spirit. God has ordained the human teacher also. Notice the steps in the man's experience. First he was going to Jerusalem to worship. He is led from worship to the Scriptures. Then from the study of the Scriptures to personal inquiry, and from inquiry to salvation.

Notice too that God uses men to save men. He has seen fit to ordain it so. While we may get along with the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit, we can get along better if we have the teachers that God has ordained. Philip was not only an evangelist but also a teacher. God has put great honor on the teachers of religion. Some people affect to put a sort of depreciation upon teachers, and put evangelists higher. But God wants more teachers. Jesus Christ in his ministry was a teacher.

Tradition tells us that this Ethiopian carried the gospel news to his own country and a revival broke out there. And so we find that Jesus' promise and prophecy that the gospel should be preached in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth was carried out just in the order that foretold (Acts 1:8). We now come to its being carried beyond Samaria. It has been going on throughout the world ever since.



## CHAPTER IX.

### PENTECOSTAL RESULTS.

Pentecostal Conviction and Its Results. Vs. 1-30. Pentecostal Power. Vs. 31-43.

PENTECOSTAL CONVICTION AND ITS RESULTS. Vs. 1-30.

1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: *it is* hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought *him* into Damascus.

9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I *am here*, Lord.

11 And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for *one* called Saul, of Tarsus; for, behold, he prayeth,

12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting *his* hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:

14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

21 But all that heard *him* were amazed, and said: Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

23 And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:

24 But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.

25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let *him* down by the wall in a basket.

26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

27 But Barnabas took him, and brought *him* to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.

29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.

30 *Which* when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

The conversion of St. Paul is, next to the Resurrection of Jesus, the most important miracle in the New Testament. The resurrection of Jesus was a triumph in the material world whereby a dead body was brought to life. The conversion of Paul was a miracle

in the spiritual realm whereby a dead soul was brought to life. The conversion of Paul was the result of the mighty conviction that came upon him when he saw the face of Stephen and heard his dying testimony. (Chapter 7:55-60.) We have, therefore, given to this chapter the title, Pentecostal Results. The church and individual, who like Stephen are filled with the Holy Ghost, will be a source of conviction to the unsaved. And so conviction struck Paul. Men can refuse to yield to God, but they cannot help themselves when it comes to the matter of conviction. God convicts all men by some means or other. And a Spirit-filled church or man is one of his agencies of conviction. The best way to have a revival among sinners is to get the church sanctified. Such people make sinners (and especially if they be church members) uncomfortable. This is the reason the experience of holiness always causes strife since the days of John the Baptist and Jesus. Saul (or Paul) became exceedingly angry after he heard the holy Stephen with shining face testify that he saw heaven opened. He afterwards said of his feelings against Christians at this time: "I was exceedingly mad against them." (Acts 26:11.) There are three accounts of his conversion—this by Luke and two accounts by himself, which should be studied in connection with this. (See Chapter 22:1-11 and Chapter 26:8-18.) So then here are the links in the chain—the church filled with the Holy Ghost at Pentecost; Stephen (one of this Spirit-filled church), so testifying and shining as to strike Saul with conviction; Saul (or Paul) becoming converted at just the time when a great leader of this great cause was a necessity; and the work wonderfully advancing under his leadership. God knew just the man fitted for the crisis. He always has the proper man for the hour. Paul was a man of the best education that the schools of that day could furnish and endowed with great intellectual powers, and a remarkably conscientious man, all his days. Even in persecuting the church he was conscientious. He was spiritually, morally and intellectually the greatest man the world has ever seen. And no man ever lived with perhaps the exception of Moses, who exerted so great an influence on the world for good. This is the leviathan in whose jaws the Almighty had his hook and who was raging as a wild animal. His conversion is one of the great proofs of the divinity of the Christian religion. It marked a new era in the

history of the Christian religion and of the world, when this classical scholar and deep thinker was soundly converted.

The chapter opens with a contrast between Saul and Philip whose wonderful zeal is spoken of in the preceding chapter. Now we see him display another kind of zeal—that of persecution. He was “yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter.” He had been in that raging condition of mind after the death of Stephen (Chapter 8:3) and he kept it up. He was an extreme zealot, determined to destroy the sect of Nazarenes, as his religious duty. He was like a fiery volcano breathing out destruction. To convert such an extreme enemy in a moment and render him as quiet in spirit as a lamb, was indeed one of the great miracles of early Christianity.

So in his zeal to wipe out what he considered error, and in his self-conceit as being just the one to do it, he went to the high-priest and asked authority to visit the city of Damascus, to exterminate the Nazarenes there. No one asked him to do this, but he *applied* for permission. This shows his hatred and self-conceit. The distance was between 120 and 150 miles. There were Christians that distance from Jerusalem. It shows how wonderfully the work was spreading.

The Lord did not arrest him at the beginning of his journey, but let him finish his course and have it out, and just as he got ready to persecute the church, stopped him. As he came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light shone about him. It was not “from heaven” as the common version has it. It was the same bright cloud doubtless that was present with the Israelites in their journeyings, the same glory that shone in the Shechinah. It was at midday. So this could be no illusion. The sun is very bright and fierce at noon in that country, but this light outshone the sun, and he fell to the earth with “a sunstroke from the Sun of Righteousness.” At the same time he heard a voice speaking in Hebrew (Acts 26:14), saying “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” This was no imagining on the part of Saul, for those who were with him heard the voice. (Vs. 7 and Acts 22:9.) Saul was astonished at the voice. The crucified Jesus, whom Paul thought was dead was alive (more alive than ever) and was standing on picket duty to guard his church and here challenges the enemy. He shows Saul that in persecuting the church he was



really persecuting its Lord. Jesus is so thoroughly identified with his church that it is impossible to persecute his little ones without persecuting him. O, that men would beware of their conduct against the cause of God! What a fearful account some must render for their persecution of holiness! "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of my eye." We think Saul fell to the ground in his astonishment, for he doubtless saw Jesus. Ananias says (Vs. 17) "Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way." Barnabas also said so in verse 27 (See also I Cor. 2:1 and 15:8).

Saul had always been an honest man up to the degree of his light. He said in another place that he thought he was doing God service (See Chap. 26:9). So now in astonishment he asks, "Who art thou, Lord?" And when the reply comes, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest," he never shrinks back at the new light, but accepts it, although it upsets the theology and principles of a lifetime. He does not even stop to count the cost, but walks right up to the new light. The words, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what will thou have me to do?" are not in the best manuscripts.

The first command is, "Arise and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." This was a severe test for a man, who had come over a hundred miles clothed with authority to drive out Christianity—to go willingly in the city, blinded and led by others. It was a test of humility indeed. The men, who were with him, heard the sound of the voice, but did not hear anything intelligible, so they got nothing out of it. The effects of the divine glory blinded him so that, although his eyes were opened later, yet he probably never fully recovered his sight.

His companions led the blinded Saul by the hand into the city, where he remained three days without eating or drinking. The abrupt change in all his life views, together with his intense conviction and his blindness, probably drove all appetite away. He was alone evidently, for the Christians were afraid of him and the unbelieving Jews would want nothing to do with him. "His conversion involved in Saul a change of *creed*; from believing that he ought to do things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth (Chapter 26:3), he became a worshipper (Vs. 11) and

a believer in and a preacher of his divinity (Vs. 20, 22); it wrought a change of moral purpose; from being a persecutor of Christ, he became a missionary of the cross; it was a change of *allegiance*; from doing what he thought in himself he ought to do, he became a devoted servant of Christ (Ch. 26:9; Rom. 1:1), praying without ceasing, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? A change of *spirit*; from being exceedingly mad against the disciples of Jesus Christ (Ch. 26:11), he became the chief exponent and apostle of love, patience and long suffering.’’

And now the Lord began to call on some of his church to help this man into the light. God has seen fit to lead men to salvation by human agency. Just as he used Philip to lead the eunuch into the light, so here he used a disciple by the name of Ananias. God spoke to him in a trance and told him to go to Straight Street and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, “for behold he prayeth.” Probably Saul had been praying all the time for three days. It looks as if he was completely turned around, from a raging fierceness to a peaceful, prayerful disposition. Saul had prayed *through*. God had been kind to him in answering his prayer, by giving him a vision of Ananias coming in and laying his hands upon him, that he might receive his sight.

Ananias was almost staggered in his faith to be told that the worst persecutor that the church had was praying. He seems to want to ask an explanation from the Lord, for reports had reached Damascus of Saul’s awful havoc against the church. Saul’s influence and persecution must have been very great to travel so far from Jerusalem.

Here we notice for the first time (Vs. 13) that God’s people are called saints or *holy ones*. This name is given them about sixty times in the New Testament. Paul directed nearly all his epistles to the saints, and yet some people say there have never been any holy people on earth.

It seems that the object of Saul’s mission—to destroy the church—had been generally noised abroad, for Ananias knew. He says “he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name.” (See also verses 21 and 26.) No doubt the church at Damascus had hidden away.

So the Lord encouraged Ananias to go and visit Paul by saying,

“He is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name.” The word translated vessel means any kind of instrument. We learn here that God had chosen Saul for a special work to be the great apostle to the Gentiles. It does *not* mean that he had chosen him to salvation any more than any other sinner, for he chooses all men to salvation—“whosoever will.” But “God has his plan for every man.” He has his plan to have some men preach the Gospel, who refuse to be converted, and hence never fulfill his plan for them. As sure as we are unwilling to quit sin and yield to God, we are frustrating his plans. See the variety of plans God has for men. He did not call everybody to be a leader as he did Paul. Some people say, “If I could only have a conviction and conversion like that of Paul!” Sam Jones used to say, “God never takes out his big gun except when he is after big game.” God gave Saul just the conviction he needed to fully show him his condition, and that is all he gives any man. Saul could have resisted had he desired, just as the hearers of Stephen did. It took a mighty shock to convince Saul. He was so sure that he was right. God chose him as his standard bearer to lead his army against the heathen. It took more than any ordinary man to properly fill this office, “before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.” He stood before King Agrippa and Nero, and he was constantly preaching to the children of Israel.

During the three days that Saul was in darkness, he must have been regenerated, for he was in a condition whereby God revealed his life-work to him and also that he must suffer greatly for the sake of Jesus. Who can suppose God could or would show such things to an unregenerate man! “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” It is evident, therefore, that the time of his regeneration was when he yielded to Jesus in the highway. Jesus showed Paul in advance that he would be a great sufferer for his sake. But Saul was so genuinely regenerated and convinced that Jesus was divine that the prospect did not stagger or dismay him. It took grace to be willing to accept this calling for life. But he had so much of the divine blessing upon him that he did not draw back or flinch. God sometimes foretells to his saints what they must endure. He tells

us all in his book that we must meet with tribulation in this world. We must expect it as truly as did Saul. It is the common lot of mortals. Peter says, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." What a strange thing that the chief thing Jesus showed this man was not the great victories and the sublime successes, but the trials he was to meet! What a strange way of recruiting the army of God—to tell of the hardships! We suppose Paul had so much of the divine glory already that it was not necessary to speak of the future glory, but necessary to let him know of the trials, lest he be surprised and disheartened when they came.

So Ananias went and put his hands upon Saul. This was not the ceremony of ordination, spoken of in our notes on chapter 8:17, but simply a symbol of the grace and gift of the Holy Ghost about to be imparted to him. This the Lord had already spoken of to Ananias in Vs. 12. Ananias addressed him as "Brother Saul." Here we have another proof that he was now regenerate and belonged to the family of God. Abbott says of the term brother, "It became a common appellation of Christians in their conversation with each other." The Lord here sent Ananias as an instrument by which this Christian (not a sinner) might be filled with the Holy Ghost, just as he filled his church at Pentecost; just as Peter and John went to the converts at Samaria (Acts 8) that they might receive the Holy Ghost. God nowhere promises the fullness of the Spirit to sinners, nor is there any account in the New Testament where sinners received the fullness of the Spirit. We note here that the physical healing and the fullness of the Spirit were given at the same time. The restoration of his sight was a proof that he now received the fullness of the Spirit, just as the healing of the palsied man was the proof that his sins were forgiven. Jesus said (Luke 5:24), "But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (he said unto the sick of the palsy) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch." The physical is always of lesser importance and is a proof of the accomplishment of the greater miracle in the soul.

He was then baptized on the spot in the house of Judas. It

was a private baptism. We have somehow in these days come to think that it is a ceremony only for a public service, and that it is an initiation into the visible church. At this time there was no church organization.

Notice the immediateness of affairs. The sight came immediately. The purifying baptism also came immediately. It was not a slow process of growth or development.

Verse 9 says he fasted three days. No doubt he had become very weak, physically. So now he took food and "was strengthened." He kept a genuine fast because it was from the soul. He was too much occupied with spiritual matters to eat. Set fasts amount to little. They often become meritorious in the sight of those who practice them, and become a snare to receiving salvation by faith alone. There is no merit in fasting. When we become so much occupied in spiritual things that we forget the wants of the body, then we really fast. So Saul remained a few days with the disciples of Damascus, recruiting his strength.

Having become strong immediately he preached *Christ*—not *about* Christ—in the synagogue, or Jewish meeting-houses of Damascus. The theme of his preaching was that Jesus is the Son of God. When a convert like Saul has had a previous schooling, it is perfectly proper to let him go to preaching at once. Thus Jesus captured a big gun from Satan, and turned it on the enemy at once. We see instances of this same plan in John 1:41, 45 and Mark 5:9—those, who are saved, immediately becoming preachers.

This amazed all that heard him. The lion had been turned into a lamb. We see this kind of a miracle repeated all through the ages. Some of the best preachers of the world like Augustine, Bunyan, Ouseley, were violent opposers, became changed in heart, came to their right mind, and began to preach.

But while the people were amazed, Saul grew stronger every day. There is nothing that will so encourage young converts as to set them to testifying and preaching. He was "being strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man." (Eph. 3:16.) Just what he prayed for the Ephesian church. Like Stephen he confounded all his adversaries (Chapter 6:10). A man filled with the Holy Ghost, well educated and of great mental power, is the mightiest agency on earth for shaking the kingdom of

Satan. He proved so clearly that Jesus was the Messiah that no one could offer any argument against it, and, of course, as is usually the case when men have no good argument, they persecute. This is one of the tactics of the carnal mind. The Jews who lived in this Syrian city had no power to try or condemn any one. So they formed a conspiracy to assassinate Saul.

The fact that a plot had been formed against him leaked out and the disciples let him down through a window by the wall of the city, as no doubt his enemies were watching for him at the gates. Houses in the East were often built into the walls of the city, with bay windows overhanging the walls. In 2 Cor. 11:33 we are told what kind of a basket it was. The Greek word there means a basket made of rope woven together. So Saul had a stormy time from the very beginning, ending in his martyrdom about thirty years later, but God so blessed him that sometimes he did not know whether he was "in the body or out of the body." (2 Cor. 12:13.) So he escaped and started back to Jerusalem. No doubt he thought that the people, because of his former course, would hear him (Chapter 22:19, 20). But they did not hear him willingly. He had been away from there three years (Gal. 1:18) since he left on his journey of persecution. He stopped at the house of Peter while there for fifteen days (Gal. 1:18). There God gave him a vision (Chapter 22:18-21), telling him to leave the city.

Here he was in a serious dilemma—the Jews hated him, and the disciples were afraid of him and thought he was pretending to be a disciple and spying out the people in order to the better persecute them. "But there was a good man full of the Holy Ghost and faith" named Barnabas. (Acts 11:22.) He had spiritual insight and saw that Saul had a genuine experience of salvation. He narrated to the brethren that Saul had seen (not merely heard, but seen) the Lord in the way and spoken to him and had preached the word boldly at Damascus. What a blessing a man of ordinary talent full of the Holy Ghost sometimes becomes in helping some one of greater ability and getting them started in a great career. Unable to do much themselves, they make it possible for some one else to do great things. So God has a place for little folks whereby they can help big folks. The

great steamer is dependent upon the little tugs to get it out to sea.

It will be noted here that Saul was a controversialist. He "disputed against the Grecians." Some people are greatly opposed to controversy. They think it is contrary to holiness. But Jesus and the apostles were great controversialists. They contended for the truth against error. Holiness means antagonism against sin. When God uttered the first prophecy in Eden concerning the seed of the woman and the serpent, he said, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed." Holiness in the heart is the enmity that he puts between the serpent and the woman. Holiness is hostility to sin. Holiness, therefore, will not allow error to go unrebuked. It is cowardly and wicked to let false doctrine go unchallenged. Holiness is no jelly fish, sickly, sweetish affair. We may not like the sound of war, but the doctrines and truths we hold sacred were brought to us by the heroes who risked their lives to defend these truths. Somebody fought for the truths that some of us today would surrender without a struggle.

#### PENTECOSTAL POWER. Vs. 31-43.

31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost were multiplied.

32 And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all *quarters*, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.

33 And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.

34 And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

35 And all that dwell at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.

36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid *her* in an upper chamber.

38 And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring *him* that he would not delay to come to them.

39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning *him* to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

41 And he gave her *his* hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.

43 And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

The churches now had rest for a time, because the chief persecutor, Saul, had been converted, and because the Roman emperor, Caligula, had ordered his statue set up on the temple at Jerusalem. This so exasperated the Jews that they forgot for the time being to persecute the Christians. Three things are said of the churches at this time. The passage is correctly rendered, "Then had the church rest, being built up and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost was multiplied." (Rev. Ver.) This is always the result where a church is filled with the Holy Ghost. It is built up or edified, and walks in the fear of God with the constant aid of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Is it not strange with the history of the church so emphatic on this point, that churches seek everything else except the indwelling of the Holy Ghost to build them up? The most prosperous days of the church when it saw its most splendid triumphs were when men in it were filled with the Holy Ghost, during the first and second centuries. The word "comfort" here is a Greek word signifying to call to one's help. It means the helpful presence of the Holy Spirit. Such churches multiply. Many are afraid of the experience of holiness lest it divide the church, when it is that which multiplies it. Satan has two lies; first, that if a man gets saved he will have no more joy in this world; second, if the church is sanctified it will be divided.

We now see some manifestations of the results of the Pentecostal blessing in the experience of Peter. He also had some history worth writing as well as Stephen, Philip and Saul. In his itinerant ministry, Peter came to Lydda, a large town nine miles



from Joppa on the road to Jerusalem. Here Peter performed a miracle which brought Christianity into favor with the people. The first thing we note is that Peter visited the "saints which dwelt at Lydda." All God's true people are called saints. The term is not popular. People of today sneer at it. But it is the Bible name for Christians, nevertheless. All God's people are sanctified and the only difference is that those who receive the fullness of the Spirit are *wholly* sanctified. Peter saw a saint who had been bedridden for eight years, afflicted with palsy. He called him by name, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise and make thy bed." The word bed is not in the original. It is literally, "Arise and spread." Other people had been making his bed, now he was to do it for himself. And this cure was wrought immediately. We like the immediateness and instantaneousness of the Gospel. The omnipotent Jesus can make the soul instantaneously well just as readily as the body. Who would deny it? So he arose showing that his lower limbs were cured. He made his bed, proving his arms and hands were also healed. God has always given his prophets power to work miracles at the beginning of every dispensation; at the inauguration of the dispensation of the law were the miracles wrought by Moses. At the beginning of the dispensation of the prophets were the miracles of Elijah and Elisha. During the short dispensation of Jesus Christ, the miracles that he wrought and now at the beginning of the Holy Ghost dispensation we have the miracles wrought by Peter, John and Paul, as certificates of the truths they preached.

Peter was also instrumental in the raising of a good woman in Joppa, a town nearby. Dorcas was her name in Greek, and Tabitha was her name in Aramaic. The name means *gazelle*. She was an unusually good woman, abounding in good works. She had died and the saints greatly mourned her. Also the widows, for whom she had made garments. There is a question whether the grief of the widows was not selfish, as they would get no more garments. There is a question, too, whether much of our grief when the righteous die is not selfish. Certainly they are better off to be with Jesus. Do we mourn because they are better off? or is it at our own loss? Peter by divine power raised her to life. This miracle caused many to believe on the Lord. Thus we see the

benefit of miracles—to evidence Christianity. Peter remained at Joppa at the house of a tanner named Simon, and took a vacation, spending much of the time in prayer—a good way for preachers to take a vacation.

## CHAPTER X.

### HUMAN INSTRUMENTALITY IN DIVINE CLEANSING.

The Preparation of the Congregation for the Preacher. Vs. 1-8.  
The Preparation of the Preacher for the Congregation. Vs. 9-23. The preparation of the Congregation for the Holy Ghost. Vs. 24-33. The Sermon and Its Result. Vs. 34-48.

### THE PREPARATION OF THE CONGREGATION FOR THE PREACHER. Vs. 1-8.

1 There was a certain man in Cæsarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian *band*,

2 A devout *man*, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.

3 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.

4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for *one* Simon, whose surname is Peter :

6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side : he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually ;

8 And when he had declared all *these* things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

We have seen in the experience of Philip and the eunuch (Chapter 8:26-40) and of Ananias and Saul (Chapter 9:1-18) how God uses men in the salvation and sanctification of other men—the human instrumentality. We now have the history of Peter's mission to the house of Cornelius, that they might be purified from sin by the coming into their hearts of the Holy Ghost which we are told in Acts 15:9 was accomplished at this time. It was accomplished by the preaching of Peter. God has seen fit to place great

honor upon preaching. It has pleased him "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." And as long as the world stands this divinely honored method of saving men will be used.

The place was Caesarea, a large, prosperous city on the Mediterranean Sea, about seventy miles northwest of Jerusalem. It was a Gentile city. Philip, the evangelist, had been there quite recently (See Chapter 8:40) and Cornelius had doubtless been awakened and converted at that time. The apostles had not yet preached to the Gentiles, or even thought of such an innovation. But Philip had done so. He had already been instrumental in the salvation of the Gentile Ethiopian (Chapter 8). So Cornelius was being prepared for the reception of the fullness of the Spirit. Let us see (1) who this man was; (2) how God prepared him to receive the fullness of the Spirit.

*Who was Cornelius?* He was a centurion of the band called *The Italian*. The Roman army was divided into legions, and each legion was divided into *cohorts*, each cohort was divided into three maniples, containing from fifty to one hundred men, under the command of a centurion, who thus was virtually the same as a captain of a company in a modern army. Cornelius commanded a maniple of about one hundred men. The maniple belonged to the Italian Cohort, or Band, called so because its soldiers were natives of Italy. The Romans had conquered Judea and made Caesarea their principal city.

He was a "*devout man.*" In other words, he was a God-fearing, pious man, accepted of God, as verse 35 shows. "The Greek word for devout," says Hudson in his Greek Concordance, "is a term applied to proselytes to Judaism." We find others in the New Testament (See Matt. 8:5-13, Acts 2:5). Abbott says, "Whether he was a true, regenerated child of God has been questioned, but chiefly because the supposition that he was so is inconsistent with our often too narrow theology. The very object of the narrative is to teach Peter, and through him the primitive church, the lesson which in all ages the church has been slow to learn, that God accepts every man, whatever his nationality or his religious ignorance, who reverences God, seeks further light from him, and does this in the way of practical righteousness." We believe God taught Peter this lesson (that the gospel was for

Gentiles) by giving Cornelius and his household the second blessing of the fullness of the Holy Ghost, thus proving that they already had the first blessing—regeneration. It is very certain that he could not have been a devout man and a sinner at the same time. It has been suggested that he was the centurion who at the crucifixion said, "This is the Son of God."

*He feared God.* Lest some might say his devoutness was only a form, this is added, "he feared God." His heart went with his forms and profession of religion. It would be an absurdity and a contradiction of terms to say that this man was a God-fearing sinner. He must, therefore, have been a saved man.

"*With all his house.*" He had family religion. This is no small evidence of the experience of salvation. While an unsaved man *may* go through the forms of family religion, a saved man *will* surely have the forms of family religion and seek to get his household saved. A man can not have any spiritual religion at all who does not seek to have his family saved. "Cornelius, like Abraham, influenced his household by imparting his own convictions of duty and worship." We pity the parent who does not daily invoke the divine blessing upon his household; who does not feel the need of divine help in rearing his family. More than this, it says his family, too, feared God. He had the blessed privilege of seeing his family in the fold of God. What a blessed thing it is to have one's family walking in the ways of religion.

*He gave much alms to the people.* Prayer and alms giving go together. A man of prayer will be a helper of the poor. The ten commandments are divided into two tables—duties to God and man, or better, love to God and man, for love is the fulfilling of the law. As sure as we love God, we will love man and seek to help God's poor, who he says are always with us. Alms giving is not meritorious. Our benevolence will not produce salvation. But our experiences of salvation will produce benevolence. No man truly loves God who does not love his fellow man. Cornelius was an unusually benevolent man. He gave *much* alms, because he feared and loved God.

He "*prayed to God always.*" This meant a great deal when we consider that he was a Roman, and the Romans generally believed that one religion was as good as another, and as long as a man

had religion it was no matter what kind it was. There are some such people in our time. But Christianity is an exclusive religion and it teaches that all other religions are wrong. This man worshipped only Jehovah, for he prayed to him "always." He had stepped out from the heathenism of his own nation. He surely would have had nothing to do with the Congress of Religion at the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893.

When Luke says "he prayed to God alway," he does not mean that he was always on his knees, but his heart ever had a devotional tendency. He kept sending up prayer to heaven when he could not be on his knees. Austin Phelps says, "We miss very much devotional joy by the neglect of fragmentary prayer. In the intervals which separate periodical seasons of devotion, we need a habit of offering up brief ejaculatory expressions of devout feeling. The morning and evening sacrifice depend very much upon these interspersed offerings as these in return are dependent upon those. Communion with God in both is assisted by linking the 'set times' together by a chain of heavenward thoughts and aspirations, in the breaks which occur in our labors and amusements. Nothing else can do this so naturally as the habit of ejaculatory prayer. The *spirit* of prayer may run along the line of such a habit through a lifetime. So one may live in a *state* of prayer, 'a devout man that prays always.'" We do not know of any man mentioned in the Bible except Cornelius as praying "always." What genuine marks of regenerating grace we find in this man's experience!

We see here the rewards that come to the man who prays much—the revelation of an angel, the meeting of a preacher and receiving his message and the baptism with the Holy Ghost. Surely it pays to pray without ceasing, "Much real praying is in the line of much blessing."

It was at the ninth hour of the day (3 P. M.) that the angel appeared to him. This was one of the Jewish hours for daily prayer and he was a Jewish proselyte. This seems to show that although he had a constant spirit of prayer, yet he also observed stated times of prayer. He was evidently praying for the Baptism with the Holy Ghost, which had been poured out on so many others

in those days. We think so because that was what he received eventually through the ministration of the angel and Peter.

He received the assurance through the angel that his prayer and alms had come up as a memorial before God. God was to answer them, is the idea. Abbott says, "The fact that the prayers of Cornelius were heard and answered is of itself conclusive that before hearing the gospel from Peter, he was accepted as a child of God." We recommend this interpretation from this unprejudiced source, to those who deny the second work of grace. God does not hear the prayer of sinners.

We have here another proof that God answers prayer. Some teach that all the answers we get in prayer is reflex, manifested while in submission to the will of God and toning up our faith, but that God does not directly answer prayer. But here we see this error refuted.

God directly blessed him in answer to prayer. He had evidently been asking God what he should do to receive the Holy Ghost, for the angel told him that Peter should tell him what he ought to do.

Notice the faith of Cornelius. He sends a long distance to a strange city and to a strange man just on the command of the angel. He tells the two servants and the devout soldier just what he believed in the matter, so that they were able to tell the whole story when they met Peter.

Notice that it was "a devout soldier" who went with the two servants of Cornelius. It seems that his piety was so genuine that some of the Roman soldiers under him became religious also. So he sends the three on this singular errand to Joppa. Thus we see that God does all he can to prepare an audience for the preacher. He convicts by his Spirit before every revival. He is keeping the world constantly under conviction.

#### THE PREPARATION OF THE PREACHER FOR THE CONGREGATION. Vs. 9-23.

9 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the house top to pray about the sixth hour :

10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,

11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:

12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat.

14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.

15 And the voice *spake* unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.

16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house and stood before the gate,

18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what *is* the cause wherefore ye are come?

22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

23 Then called he them in, and lodged *them*. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

24 And the morrow after they entered into Cæsarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.

25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped *him*.

26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.

27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.

28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.



29 Therefore came I *unto you* without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?

30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,

31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of *one* Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.

33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

It requires a great deal of training to make a successful preacher. We do not mean merely intellectual training, but spiritual. The Lord can accomplish a great deal in a short time, but to be a pure, clean channel for the outflow of divine truth requires a great work in the heart, even after we are wholly sanctified. Good men are often warped by their prejudices, and both hinder the progress of divine truth and also hinder growth and usefulness because of racial, or denominational prejudices. Peter had been raised, and educated as a Jew with all the national prejudices against the Gentiles. It had not yet dawned upon him that Gentiles were included in the number of the beneficiaries of the atonement of Jesus Christ. He had not even given the matter a thought, it was so far removed from his Jewish notions. And now God was to make known to him by a revelation that the Gentiles were not only to be partakers of salvation, but partakers of the highest form of salvation—the purification of the heart by the baptism with the Holy Ghost. And just as God had to divide the animals into clean and unclean classes under the Old Dispensation to teach the degraded Israelites the first principles of holiness, so now the Lord had to employ this same kindergarten method of clean and unclean to teach Peter that the Gentiles could be cleansed from all sin and have like precious faith with the Hebrew Christians.

As the Messengers approached Joppa, Peter went to the housetop to pray at noon. The tops of the houses being flat were used for various domestic purposes (See 1 Sam. 9:26; 2 Sam. 16:22; 2 Sam. 11:2; Judges 16:27; Isa. 21:1; Nah. 8:16). We have

noticed previously that Peter was having a short rest from preaching. It is a good thing for a preacher to take time for prayer in vacation. It was evidently just before dinner, for he became very hungry. This was a good preparation for the manifestations of the sheet and the animals. God sent a vision to Cornelius; he allowed Peter to fall into a trance. A trance is different from a vision. The latter is connected usually with sleep, while the trance is a mental condition in which the person is, as it were, transported into another realm of thought, retaining his consciousness and the objects that he sees seem real. This representation of a sheet filled with animals clean and unclean, just *before* the messengers got to Peter is very significant. To the Jew the unclean animals coming in contact with the clean, made the whole mass unclean. The modern Jew too is fastidious about the matter of clean and unclean meats.

When the horrified Peter objected to eating such food, he was doubtless no less startled to hear the voice that bid him kill and eat, which also said, "What God hath cleansed that call not thou common." This shows in the sequel that God had cleansed the house of Cornelius at least by that initial cleansing called in the Scripture "the washing of regeneration." (Titus 3:5.)

Peter knew the revelation had a meaning and was pondering as to what it signified. He knew it had a symbolical meaning, for once he had seen a symbolical meaning of spiritual cleansing as he talked with Jesus about the feet washing. (John 13:9.) He was accustomed to symbolical teaching. So the Holy Spirit told him to go and meet the messengers of Cornelius, who had arrived at the gate. When we are honestly hesitating as to what to do, the Holy Spirit will help us solve our problems, if like Peter we obey him, "nothing doubting;" even if it is contrary to the prejudices of a lifetime, "Nothing doubting." This is the secret of liberty in experience. Let us find out what the Holy Spirit wants and then go about that duty "nothing doubting." This will give true freedom in the Holy Ghost. Here we have another proof that the Holy Spirit is a person. He is here represented as speaking directly to Peter.

Here, too, we learn that the Spirit considers himself as acting

when men act under his direction. Cornelius under his direction sent these messengers, and The Spirit says, "I have sent them."

So Peter obeyed. Going down to the gate of the house he told them that he was the man whom they sought and asked what they wanted of him. They reply that Cornelius had sent them. They describe Cornelius as "a just man." So Cornelius was not only a devout man, who feared God, gave much alms to the people and prayed alway, but he was also "*a just man*," according to the testimony of his own servants. When a man is thus regarded by his employees, there is no better proof of his sterling character. Cornelius, before he received the Holy Spirit, had a reputation for righteousness. He was a just or justified man.

It was afternoon: these messengers had traveled that day thirty miles, so they resolved to wait until the next day before starting on their journey to Caesarea. On the morrow Peter and several of the brethren of Joppa went back with them to Caesarea. There were at least six of these brethren (See Chapter 11:12), who later were witnesses when Peter was called to account by the church for preaching the gospel to the Gentiles.

So the next day they arrived at Caesarea, and Cornelius, anticipating about the time they would be there, had a congregation all waiting to receive the preacher. This readiness to hear the word shows how eager and hungry they were to receive the truth. No wonder the Holy Spirit fell so readily on such a company! Here is given to us one of the most beautiful scenes in the Book of Acts—the inauguration of the Gentile Dispensation (to which we belong) by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. "After the narrative of the first Christian Pentecost, the second book of Luke (The Acts) scarcely contains a picture which in beauty and interest can be placed above that of the reception into the Church of Cornelius and his household. It is the history of the Gentile day of Pentecost. Moment worthy of eternal remembrance when the first Gentile threshold was crossed for the first time by the feet of them who published peace and the earliest beam of light dawned upon the land of the shadow of death." (Van Oosterzee.)

Cornelius, like Peter, needed correction of some notions he

had imbibed from his early training. He had, like all the Romans, imbibed the heathen idea that every messenger that God sent must also be divine, and he fell down at the feet of Peter to worship him. Peter instantly raised him up, telling him, "I also am a man." Would that this were the last time that people had tried to worship the preacher. It would be well if the popes who claim through the centuries to have succeeded Peter, had the spirit of Peter in refusing to be worshiped.

It is evident from Chapter 11:3 that Cornelius brought forth something for Peter to eat, doubtless dinner or supper to refresh him before he began to preach. And Peter evidently refers to this fact when he says, "It is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or to come unto one of another nation." He evidently refers to the social custom of eating. Now in eating the meaning of the vision of the sheet dawns upon Peter. He had been told to "rise, kill and eat." Now he eats, recognizing that the Gentiles were brethren in Christ—not sinners, for the Spirit had regenerated them. Thus we have another proof that these Gentiles were regenerated before they received the Holy Spirit in his fullness.

Peter says, "Therefore I came unto you without making any objection." This shows the ready obedience of Peter. He did not like Moses (Ex. 4:10, 13) or Jeremiah (Jer. 1:6) or Jonah (Jonah 4:1) make objections when called to a great and universal duty, for he had the indwelling Holy Spirit who helps in great emergencies, when duty seems well-nigh impossible. "I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?" A good question for every preacher to ask of his people. Cornelius then explained to Peter how he came to send for him, and said, "Now we are all present before God." He did not think preaching was an intellectual performance or entertainment, or a place to hear the oratory of a man, but to get a message from God. It was a time not to be entertained or to criticize, but to hear from God through Peter. Would that all preaching was thus estimated. The preachers would preach better and the people would get spiritual help and grow in grace to spiritual edification. In apostolic days they went to meeting to meet God and not to hear star preaching. Cornelius felt that the message was "commanded

of God." And we should look at the divine message of the pulpit in the same light.

## THE SERMON AND ITS RESULT. Vs. 34-48.

34 Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons :

35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

36 The word which *God* sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ : (he is Lord of all :)

37 That word, *I say*, ye know, which was published throughout all Judæa, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached ;

38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power : who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil ; for God was with him.

39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem ; whom they slew and hanged on a tree :

40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly ;

41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead.

43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we ?

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

The prepared audience now hear a sermon from the prepared preacher. The first thing Peter speaks of is the lesson he has learned from this whole experience of himself and Cornelius. It is a twofold lesson—negative and positive. 1. Negative: God

is no respecter of persons. Gentiles are just as much entitled to his favor as Jews. 2. Positive, that God accepts in every nation those who fear him and work righteousness. So we learn from this that Cornelius had already been accepted of God before he sent for Peter—before he received the Holy Ghost. So then the heathen in his blindness, who fears God and works righteousness is accepted of him.

He then goes on to preach Jesus to the company, telling of his earthly ministry in Judea and Galilee. This ministry commenced in Galilee (Luke 4:14, 37, 44), for Jesus commenced his ministry at the age of thirty after he was baptized by John. He also tells us just what the Holy Spirit administered to Jesus after he was baptized with water by John. It was anointing. This is a very important passage and sets right a very important matter. It shows us that Jesus was not *baptized* with the Holy Ghost, but *anointed* with the Holy Ghost. There is quite a difference between baptism and anointing. Baptism means cleansing. Jesus had no sin from which to be cleansed. Anointing was the usual form for inaugurating a priest or king into office. Under the Old Testament Dispensation this anointing was with oil, which is a symbol of the Holy Ghost. The oil was not used in the anointing of Jesus, but the Holy Spirit (which the oil represented) himself came as a dove and rested upon Jesus, who now entered upon his priesthood, being thirty years of age (Luke 3:30), which was the time when priests entered upon their office. The form of inauguration into the office of the priest was the washing of the body with water and anointing with oil (See Leviticus VIII). So the idea some people advance of following the example of Jesus in baptism is not scriptural. His baptism did not signify or symbolize that he was cleansed from sin, but that he was set apart for the priesthood “after the order of Melchizedeck.” We need to be baptized with the Holy Ghost to be cleansed from sin and will need frequent anointings to keep us empowered for service.

Peter says he was also anointed with power. It was not so much the power to work miracles. This was not the great element of power in the experience of Jesus. The great potency of Jesus was in his holy life and character. This was greater than his

miracles. "Power is not merely the power to perform miracles, but the whole, moral and spiritual might manifested by Christ's life of doing good and healing." (Hackett.)

After Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost and power, he "went about doing good." In this he symbolized the Christian's privilege and life work—to go about doing good. This we will do if we are anointed with the Holy Ghost. And we can not do it as we should until we are anointed with the Holy Ghost. He not only did good but he cast out devils from those who were possessed by them.

Peter having preached the word (vs. 36) telling Cornelius of the life and death of Jesus, now declares that he is a witness of the truth he has just preached. He had seen Jesus work his miracles. Thus he proclaims himself a witness. This is just what Jesus said he and the other apostles also would be after they received the Holy Ghost. (Acts 1:8.) He then tells these Gentiles how his own countrymen had crucified Jesus. As the Gentiles were not guilty of this act, he does not enlarge upon its heinousness as he did when preaching to the Jews (See Acts 2:23; 3:14; 4:10; 5:30). He also tells them that Jesus did not show himself to everybody after his resurrection but to certain special chosen witnesses. We suppose the reason he did not, was for the same reason, that he would not work wonders just to please the curiosity of Herod and the Pharisees. He was only anxious to convince his own disciples of his resurrection, because he did not purpose to advance his cause by signs and wonders, but by a church filled with the Holy Ghost.

These chosen witnesses were commanded to herald the resurrection and testify. This is the method employed ever since in spreading the kingdom of Jesus—by preaching and testifying. It is the duty of every preacher both to preach and to testify. To testify means to tell an experience. No man is fit to preach who does not have an experience. Testimony is becoming a lost art in the pulpit of today, but a true gospel preacher, both testifies and preaches. We are to prove our preaching by our testimony. We ought not to preach unless we have experience. The preacher can testify what he knows Jesus to be because his experience has proved Jesus to be divine and hence to be believed in all his

teachings. He closes his sermon by saying that the prophets testified that salvation from sin would be given through the name of Christ. Now we know that the Old Testament prophecies foretold that we of this dispensation can be saved from sin. Holiness is, therefore, according to Peter, taught in the Old Testament. "Remission of sins means deliverance from sin." Abbott says that remission means "not merely the forgiveness, that is the remission of the penalty, but the remission of sin itself, the cleansing from all unrighteousness." So we see that Peter preached holiness to these saved Gentiles.

"While Peter yet spake these words the Holy Ghost fell on all." Notice where he had come in his sermon. He had come to the point of faith. When he told them that all who believed could have remission of sins, it is evident that they believed right then, for the fire fell. It was not necessary to have an altar service. Altar services are for those who can not readily exercise faith. O, if we could make seekers believe that the gift of the Holy Ghost is imparted to those who believe and that it does not necessarily require a long drawn out series of prayers, and agonizing.

The Jewish believers who came with Peter were astonished to see the manifestations, especially the gift of tongues. This gift is mentioned three times as being given to people, who at the time were sanctified. It does not seem to have been much in vogue, except in one church—Corinth—and there it gave Paul a good deal of trouble, because it was magnified as of chief importance when it is mentioned as of eighth importance in the list of gifts. (1 Cor. 12:8-11.) It is no where in the New Testament taught that it was given to enable the primitive Christians to preach the gospel in the various languages of the world, without learning them. Those misguided people who have thought they had the gift of tongues and have gone to heathen lands expecting to preach the gospel without learning the language have met with *disappointment and ruinous failure*.

So Peter baptized with water these saved and entirely sanctified Gentiles. Notice he baptized them after they were saved and not as a means to their salvation. This ought to forever silence those people who teach that baptism is a saving ordinance, and those



other people, who teach that we can not know we are saved until we are baptized.

Notice, he says, the Gentiles had received the Holy Ghost "the same as we." Acts 15:9. A parallel passage says they and the apostles all were made pure in heart by the gift of the Holy Ghost. If these Spirit-filled souls had died before they could have been baptized they would not have been eternally lost, for their hearts were purified. Hence baptism is not essential to admittance to heaven. "The fire of the Lord fell, approving the sacrifice of the Gentiles (See Rom. 15:16), conferring on them the substance before the baptism with water, and teaching that as the Holy Ghost dispensed once more and for all with the necessity of circumcision in the flesh, so can he also, when it pleases him, with the necessity of water baptism; and warning the Christian church not to put baptism itself in the place which circumcision once held." (Alford.)



## CHAPTER XI.

### FURTHER RESULTS OF THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT UPON THE GENTILES.

The Brethren Demand an Explanation of This Irregularity. Vs. 1-18. They Take an Advanced Step in Sending Barnabas to Converted Gentiles. Vs. 19-26. The Benevolence of the Pentecostal Church. Vs. 27-30.

### THE BRETHERN DEMAND AN EXPLANATION OF THIS IRREGULARITY. Vs. 1-18.

1 And the apostles and brethren that were in Judæa heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,

3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

4 But Peter rehearsed *the matter* from the beginning and expounded *it* by order unto them, saying,

5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:

6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.

8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.

9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.

10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.

11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Cæsarea unto me.

12 And the spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:

13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house,

which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter;

14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?

18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

It was no doubt a great shock to the church at Jerusalem when the news came that the Gentiles had accepted the truth as it is in Jesus. God was now unfolding his plan which he had all through the past ages. Paul speaks of it as a wonderful thing (a mystery) in Eph. 3:3-6 "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body" as the Jews. We can not understand how much it meant to a Jew to see the national prejudices not merely of a life time, but of centuries, melt away in so short a time. Nothing shows the generous, sincere nature of Peter like this account of his accepting heartily the whole plan after he had seen the vision at Joppa.

When Peter had finished his sojourn at Caesarea (Ch. 10:48) he went to Jerusalem and the Hebrew Christians attacked him for having eaten with the household of Cornelius. The Jews had intercourse with the Gentiles, but no social intimacies. To eat with them was considered wrong.

So Peter told the story as recorded in chapter ten. The Roman Catholic Church says Peter was the first pope. But this shows that instead of being a superior to the other apostles he was on a level with them, for they took him to task for eating with Gentiles, which they would never dare to do, if he had been their superior.

Peter reports Cornelius as saying, The angel said "who shall tell thee words whereby thou shalt be saved." Telling "*words*" whereby men may be saved is a good definition of preaching.

But why should Peter tell Cornelius "*words*" whereby he

should be saved? Was he not saved already? He surely was, for Peter had perceived that these Gentiles were accepted of God (See Chapt. 10:34-35). Could a man be accepted of God and not be saved? No. We must then, as in all cases of apparent discrepancy, explain Scripture by Scripture. Abbott undertakes to explain it thus, "the language here specifies more accurately than in chapter 10:6, 33, the nature of the information which Peter was expecting. It does not, however, necessarily imply that he and his house were not already in the way of salvation, and chapter 10:2, 4, 31, 35, clearly indicates that before Peter came to him he was accepted by God. The language here justifies the conclusion that he had no assurance of salvation, and that in his case it was the mission of the Gospel to bring peace by Jesus Christ to a heart already saved by divine grace, but lacking that restful assurance which only the Gospel can impart." We can not agree with this, for the salvation of the heart by divine grace is too big an experience to possess and the possessor be unconscious of it. The term salvation is used in the Bible in several senses. It is used in the initial sense. For instance, Paul says, "Who hath saved us?" Here he refers to a present salvation. It is used in the sense of final salvation; for instance, "He that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved." (Matt. 24:13.) In Acts 2:47, "And the Lord added daily to the church, such as should be saved." The correct translation is "such as were being saved." Here we have the instance of Cornelius being not initially or finally saved, but saved from sin by the purifying baptism. We make a distinction sometimes between salvation and full salvation—the one a salvation from guilt; the other a salvation from sin itself, since we know by Acts 15:9 that Cornelius was purified from sin.

Peter says he remembered the word of Jesus, whom he here calls "The Lord." He quotes the words of Jesus that he remembered. It was Acts 1:5 where Jesus said, "John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." This is a very important passage, as it settles some things. For instance, some have made a difference between the gift of the Holy Spirit and the baptism of the Spirit. But we see here they are one and the same thing (Compare Chapter 10:47 with verse 16).

Some are uncertain whether the baptism with the Holy Spirit is anything more than the gift of power for service. But Peter here says they received the baptism of the Spirit according to the promise of Jesus, and he also says in Ch. 15:9 that their hearts were purified at this time. Consequently the baptism with the Spirit purifies the heart.

He also says in verse 17 that this was the same experience that the disciples received when they were filled with the Holy Ghost. So we learn that being "filled," "baptized" and "purified" with the Holy Spirit are one and the same experience. What could Peter do when the Gentiles received the same blessing that the apostles did at Pentecost? He could not refuse to associate with Gentiles whom God has blessed. He could not call them unclean or common whom God had cleansed. (See chapter 10:15.) To let our prejudices stand in the way of a manifest work of grace is to withstand God. When God is pouring out his Spirit and we stand aloof or criticise or draw away, we are withstanding God. We commend this to others since the days of Peter, who have been tempted to draw away from a genuine outpouring of the Spirit, because it was not in accordance with their notions. The Pentecostal church, when they heard this, did not say, "I suppose we will have to put up with it and make the best of it since God did it," but they glorified God. They were glad the Gentiles had received the blessing. One of the proofs that the blessing is from God is that when a person receives it, he wants every one else to receive it also.

They rejoiced that God had granted to the Gentiles "repentance unto life." Before this, the Jews had thought that Gentiles could obtain eternal life by becoming circumcised and thus becoming Jews. They did not believe that as Gentiles they could repent and be saved. It was an astonishment that God had given to these Gentiles the disposition to repent, and get eternal life without becoming Jewish proselytes. The fact that these Gentiles had been baptized with the Holy Ghost showed that Gentiles might not only have eternal life (regeneration), but also have all the privileges of a full salvation—the gift of the Holy Ghost. Here began a division in the Christian church that never has been fully united. One party thought the Gentiles must first become

circumcised before they could believe and be saved. The other party believed circumcision was not essential to salvation. This division has appeared in all generations and especially where the church gets formal and dead. Then it always multiplies forms and rests on them for salvation. There is little division in the church when they depend on the Spirit more than forms.

#### THEY TAKE AN ADVANCED STEP IN SENDING BARNABAS TO THE GENTILES. Vs. 19-26.

19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:

26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

Peter had gone on his own account to the house of Cornelius. Now *they send* on their own account a sanctified layman. Let us see how it came about. We turn back to the dispersion of the church after the persecutions mentioned in Acts 8:2-4. The writer brings up the history to the date of Peter's preaching to the Gentiles. Pious laymen had also been virtually doing the same thing—preaching the gospel on their own account to “Jews only,” throughout the countries north and west of Palestine. They had gone as far as Antioch in Syria. This was a very large and prosperous city. It was two miles wide and five miles long.

It was the great center of Syria and Asia Minor, situated on the border of each.

Some of these lay preachers were natives of Cyprus and Cyrene. They were Jewish proselytes; perhaps converted on the day of Pentecost. At any rate they began to tell the glad tidings to the Greeks. They had no inherited prejudices like the Jews as to offering the gospel to Gentiles. So while Peter, an apostle, was preaching to the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius, the Holy Ghost was moving these pious laymen of Cyprus and Cyrene to tell the glad tidings to other Gentiles also.

“The hand of the Lord was upon them.” The hand is a symbol of power in the Bible. In chapter 4:30 the church prayed that the Lord would grant the disciples boldness to preach by stretching out his hand to heal. We learn from this that God accompanies the testimony of his servants with divine power. The result was a multitude of converts.

When the church at Jerusalem heard of this great work in Antioch they sent Barnabas to examine it and see if the work was genuine. Barnabas was a man well suited to this work. He was not a Jew, but a native of Cyprus (Acts 4:36) and hence would not be swayed by Jewish prejudices. Neither was he an apostle, but a sanctified layman, of good sense. It is a fine thing in a church to have a layman, who is active in spiritual things, and this is the rule where churches are truly sanctified. It does not take long for a sanctified man to recognize a genuine revival of religion. God gives him spiritual discernment. Barnabas was glad. Of course he was. Nothing pleases a good man more than to see the church prosper spiritually.

Barnabas was not a preacher but an exhorter. *He exhorted the converts to become entirely consecrated.* He exhorted them to cleave to the Lord “with full purpose of heart.” In the original it is “setting forth of heart.” It refers to the setting forth or consecration of the shew bread in the tabernacle and temple (Matt. 12:4). It was a type of consecration. So Barnabas exhorted them to consecrate themselves to God just as the shew bread was consecrated to God. “With purpose of heart”—a real consecration. These converts had already repented. Consecration is never



commanded to sinners. There is not a single commandment to sinners to consecrate themselves in the Bible.

Barnabas (this son of consolation) was "a good man, full of faith and the Holy Ghost." This was the reason given for his easy recognition of the grace of God in the experience of these Gentiles. Such men have spiritual apprehension. Adam Clarke says of Barnabas, "Here is a proper character of a minister of the gospel. 1. He is a *good man*; his bad heart is changed; his evil dispositions rooted out; and the mind that was in Christ implanted in him.

2. He is *full of the Holy Ghost*. He is holy, because the Spirit of holiness dwells in him; he has not a few transient visitations or drawings from the Spirit. The Spirit is a resident in his soul and fills his heart. The Spirit is light in his understanding; discrimination in his judgment; fixed purpose and determination in righteousness in his will; purity, love, peace, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance, and fidelity—in his affections and passions. In a word the Spirit has sovereign sway in his heart; governs all passions and is the motive and principle of every righteous action.

3. He was *full of faith*. He implicitly credited his Lord; he knew that he could not lie; that his word could not fail; he expected not only the fulfillment of all promises, but also every degree of help, light, life and comfort which God might at any time see necessary for his church; he prayed for the divine blessing, and he believed that he should not pray in vain. His faith never failed because it laid hold upon that God who could not change. Behold, ye ministers of the gospel, an original minister of Christ. Emulate his piety, his faith, and his usefulness." Barnabas exhorted them to cleave to the Lord. This implies that they might have let go. There is no such doctrine in the Bible as "once in grace always in grace."

Notice how much effort the early church put forth in confirming converts. They sent Barnabas to strengthen these new lambs of the flock, and he did it by urging them, to entire consecration. How different from the modern idea of telling them to "go to work." Entire consecration brings the establishing grace of

God. There ought to be more such efforts put upon young converts.

No wonder they had great additions to their number under such a ministry. Holiness work carried on by holy men always increases the flock and makes the work flourish generally. Barnabas saw that the fields were white for the harvest and so he went back to Tarsus, to get Saul (Paul) as helper. Saul had been in Tarsus, his native city, for some time (See Chapter 9:30). Barnabas knew that Saul had been called to preach to the Gentiles at the time he was converted (Chapter 9:15). Saul probably would have preferred preaching to the Jews (See Rom. 10:1). Saul being well versed in the Greek language would be especially helpful at Antioch, where the people largely spoke Greek. So for a year these two preached the gospel, or as verse 26 says, "taught." Great honor is given to teachers in the Bible. Jesus and Paul were teachers. Some are in this day dazzled by the gifts of the evangelist and are inclined to depreciate the Christian teacher.

Here we have a very important statement worthy of our especial attention. It is this, "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Mankind are continually coining new words, as principles develop, in the world's progress. Here the term Christian is introduced into society; a word never to become obsolete; a term that has had great influence and effect in the world for nearly twenty centuries.

It is not known whether it was given by the enemies of Christ or by his friends—probably by the former, as a term of reproach, just as Puritan and Methodist were originally given in reproach by enemies. The word is used only three times in the Bible and certainly once if not three times as a term of reproach. Agrippa said to Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." The people of God are called in the New Testament "saints" sixty times; also "believers," "the faithful," "brethren" and "disciples." All of these names are more or less popular, except the term "saints." The word means "holy ones," and as holiness is not popular, neither is that term. Some denominations call themselves "Christians" who would start back in horror if called "saints," and yet that is the term that the Bible uses most.

THE BENEVOLENCE OF THE PENTECOSTAL  
CHURCH. Vs. 27-30.

27 And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.

28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar.

29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judæa:

30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

Holy people are kind and benevolent to the poor, and here we have the account of their benevolence in taking collections for the poor saints in a famine.

A prophet by the name of Agabus had come to Antioch and told them of the approaching famine. A prophet is one, not merely one who predicts future events, but one who speaks *for God*. We find several allusions in the New Testament to prophets. See Acts 13:1; 15:32; 19:6, and 21:9-10.



## CHAPTER XII.

### THE PRAYERS OF HOLY PEOPLE.

The Extremity that Prompted Prayer. Vs. 1-6. The Answer to Prayer. Vs. 7-12. The Prayer Meeting Broken Up by the Answer to the Prayer. Vs. 13-19. The Doom of the Persecutor. Vs. 20-25.

#### THE EXTREMITY THAT PROMPTED PRAYER. Vs. 1-6.

1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth *his* hands to vex certain of the church.

2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

4 And when he had apprehended him, he put *him* in prison, and delivered *him* to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

About the time that Barnabas and Saul were holding meetings in Antioch, a new persecution had begun at Jerusalem. This chapter is an account of the death of James and the arrest and deliverance of Peter during this persecution. The circumstances that led to the persecution were these: Herod Agrippa, the grandson of that Herod the Great who had destroyed the babies at Bethlehem, had now come into power, appointed by the Romans. We must not confuse him with his son, Herod Agrippa, mentioned in chapter 26. He was a grandson of Herod the Great and father of the Herod Agrippa before whom Paul made his defence in chapter 26. There were, therefore, three Herods—a blood thirsty set.

This Herod Agrippa killed James, the brother of John, probably by beheading him with the sword, a peculiarly disgraceful death in the eyes of the Jews. This James was the older brother of John. They were the sons of Zebedee, and were called "Sons of thunder." (Mark 3:17.) He, with his brother John, had asked to sit on the right and left hand in the kingdom of Jesus, and had said that they could drink of the cup that Jesus drank and be baptized with the baptism with which he was baptized. They little knew what that meant when they so spoke. It was the cup and baptism of suffering and death. James was the first of the apostles to be put to death. Very little is known of him before Pentecost. In fact, of the original twelve apostles, little is known of any, except Peter, John and Judas. James was the first to go to Paradise to live forever with his Master. We hear nothing special about his martyrdom as we do of that of Stephen, whether it was triumphant or not. After all it does not make so much difference as to the manner of our death. It is the spirit, in which we meet it, that counts.

Herod was a man of policy. He was a native of Idumea, a Roman by education and had great admiration for the Jewish religion. So, of course, he hated these followers of Jesus, the despised Nazarene. He desired to be popular with the Jews and when he saw that the death of James pleased the Jews, he seized Peter, in order to put him to death also. But it being during the days of the Passover, it was not lawful among the Jews to put any one to death. So Peter was kept in prison. After Easter (or the Passover) Herod had determined to kill him. (The word Easter should have been translated Passover.) Translators put it in, to let English readers know when this was, for Easter occurs on the same time as the Passover.

So they put Peter in prison and guarded him with four quarternions of soldiers. A quarternion was a guard of four soldiers. The night before Peter was to be brought forth, these soldiers were guarding him. The night from 6 to 6 A. M. was divided into four watches, of three hours each. Each quarternion (four soldiers) guarded him three hours until relieved by the next four, and so on. Two of each quarternion were chained to Peter so that he could not escape, and two soldiers stood before the door.

Now was the church in great extremity. James was dead and it looked as if there were no help for Peter. What a comfort it is, that we have a throne of grace, a mercy seat to which we can go in time of distress! How God loves to succor his church in times of trouble. If the Christian church had not been of divine origin, it would have been wiped off the face of the earth long ago. No other institution has had to endure what the church has. Outside enemies have never yet harmed it, when it has been true to God. The only enemies worth fearing are the foes within. How many times the church has fought out the battle and won the victory upon its knees. It did look now as if its leader, Peter, was to be slain. And so the church went to praying, "But." The word "but" is very significant. "But prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him."

We learn here that it is not only proper and scriptural to pray for the preacher, but it avails much. There are preachers today that are in a worse condition than Peter. They are imprisoned within the world of unbelief, destructive higher criticism, and worldliness—men, some of them, who once, like Peter, were spiritual leaders. The trouble is, there is no holy church like that of Pentecost, to pray them out. A holy church can do much in this line of praying their preachers out of the bondage of churchianity and formality.

While they were praying the impetuous Peter was lying quietly asleep between two soldiers. This showed that he had the victory. A man doomed to die can not usually sleep the night before. But Peter slept. He had his heart purified by faith at Pentecost. The fear was all gone. Review Peter's experience and see the progress he had made. Rashness of spasmodic courage had impelled him to attack a crowd and cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest (John 18:10). Lack of moral courage had caused him to deny Jesus before a little girl. Being sanctified and filled with moral courage, he boldly attacked the Jewish people for crucifying Jesus (Acts 3:15) and now he has the solid courage of self control and perfect faith that enabled him to sleep right on the verge of the grave. God "giveth his beloved sleep." This is the highest kind of courage. This shows what holiness will accomplish in a

man's character. He had the blessing sure—ready to live or die, as might be.

And so God delivered Peter, while he let James go home to live with Jesus. He still had use for Peter, and so he kept him a while longer in a sinful world, but allowed James the great privilege of going home to live with him. See the two pictures of faith. The church praying; Peter sleeping—faith active, and passive. Which was the greater faith? We think the latter. It was perfect faith. "He that believeth shall not make haste." Perfect faith is to pray and then act as if prayer was to be answered. Amen.

Now notice how God worked. He has many ways of working. We must not dictate how he shall answer our prayers, because he knows the best way of answering. God sent an angel to help him out. He greatly needed a guide at this time. Notice the ministry of angels in this chapter. No chapter in the Bible seems to so fully show the different offices of angels as this chapter. Here we learn that angels are messengers of God. (The word angel means messenger.) The angel *instructed* and delivered Peter. The doctrine of guardian angels is taught in Vs. 15. An angel smote Herod in judgment (Vs. 23). So we learn in this chapter that angels are messengers of God, to deliver, instruct and guard the holy and inflict judgment on the wicked.

#### THE ANSWER TO PRAYER. Vs. 7-12.

7 And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon *him*, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from *his* hands.

8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee and follow me.

9 And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.

10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.

11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and *from* all the expectation of the people of the Jews.



12 And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

So the church were most earnestly praying; and Peter lying in an apparently hopeless condition, is suddenly visited by an angel, who came with a great dazzling light. Peter was sleeping so soundly that the angel had to strike him on his side to arouse him, and even had to lift him up. And at the same time his chains fell off, while the angel told him to arise and put on his garments or tighten the girdle that bound them, and put on his cloak. Peter was so dazed that he needed to be told what to do. This shows that there was plenty of time—no need of any hurry. Peter not only escaped but had time to take all his clothes with him. Peter doubtless was so dazed that he thought he was in another trance, as at the house of Simon in Joppa (Chapter 10:10).

Peter, when he came to himself (Vs. 11) immediately recognized it all as the providence of God. In our day there are occurrences so striking that although there may be no angel helper, yet there can be no doubt that God is leading. He now considered what it was best to do. It was natural that he should turn to his special friends. So he went to the house of Mary the mother of Mark. This was the Mark who wrote the second gospel. He was a convert under the preaching of Peter (1 Peter 5:13). He found a prayer meeting going on, although it was evidently quite early in the morning, for we read in verse 18 that his escape was noticed at day break. As the guards were changed every three hours, had his escape been in the first part of the night it would have been discovered before day break. This holy church prayed through even if it took all night until they got the answer to their prayers. So we have here another proof that God directly answers prayer.

#### THE PRAYER MEETING BROKEN UP BY THE ANSWER TO THE PRAYER. Vs. 13-19.

13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.

14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.

15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel.

16 But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened *the door*, and saw him, they were astonished.

17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

18 Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter.

19 And when Herod had sought for him and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that *they* should be put to death. And he went down from Judæa to Cæsarea, and *there* abode.

Peter came to the door and knocked. A servant went to the door and recognized Peter's voice. This shows that he was no stranger, but had evidently been there often. Here is a touch of nature—the servant “opened not the door for gladness.” Her joy overcame her. She ran in and broke up the prayer meeting by declaring that Peter was there. We have seen prayers stopped by the answer in the salvation of the souls being prayed for. The people in the house told the girl that she was crazy. The answer to prayer sometimes seems incredible. We do not know whether they were praying for Peter's deliverance or praying for him in a general manner, but in either case the answer was remarkable, and beyond their expectations.

They thought that it was his angel. The Jews believed that every one has a guardian angel. Jesus speaks of this in Matthew 18:10.

So great was the hubbub—all talking at once, that Peter had to hush their noise, so as to make himself heard. He then told them to go and tell James—not the one who had been martyred, but the James, who was the brother of Jesus, and who afterwards became a pillar in the church.

When daylight came, there was a great stir in the prison, because Peter could not be found. Herod commanded the keepers of the prison to be put to death. This was the usual punishment for guards, who allowed their prisoners to escape.

## THE DOOM OF THE PERSECUTOR. Vs. 20-25.

20 And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's *country*.

21 And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.

22 And the people gave a shout, *saying, It is the voice of a god, and not a man.*

23 And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

24 But the word of God grew and multiplied.

25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled *their* ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.

Tyre and Sidon were two maritime cities of great importance on the Mediterranean Sea. Herod had become very angry with them for some reason. They evidently became frightened at the anger of Herod, so they made his chamberlain, Blastus, their friend, who became a mediator between them and Herod. This people very obsequiously made homage to Herod as he sat on his throne arrayed in gorgeous apparel, and said his voice was that "of a god and not man." An angel of God smote him and he was eaten by worms. So died the persecutor.

How different the mission of the different angels. An angel led Peter out of his clutches. An angel smote Herod. Notice the crisis of Herod's death. He had started to build a great wall about Jerusalem, which was never finished. Had it been finished the Romans probably never could have taken Jerusalem, as Jesus had prophesied. So we seen the hand of God in his death at this time. His death put an end to the persecution of the Christians, as his successors had no such vindictive disposition. So his death accomplished two purposes. His fatal disease was caused because the angel of the Lord smote him. Here we have a refutation of the erroneous doctrine that all sickness and disease are caused by the devil. The angel of the Lord smote him. He was eaten of worms. Had the devil done it, he must have created the worms, but the devil is not a creator.

“But the word of God grew and multiplied.” Herod the persecutor died, but the cause of God went right on. So it has been through all the ages. Men get in the way of the gospel and are crushed, but the gospel goes right on. Nothing can thwart the plans of God.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### HOLINESS AND FOREIGN MISSIONS.

A Holy Church is Intent in Foreign Missions. Vs. 1-4. The First Foreign Mission. Vs. 5-13. The Second Foreign Mission Work. Vs. 14-52.

A HOLY CHURCH IS INTENT IN FOREIGN MISSIONS.  
Vs. 1-4.

1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away.

4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

Who was the originator of foreign missions? The Holy Ghost. This chapter contains the account of the beginning of the first missionary expedition to the Gentiles. Verse 2 says that the Holy Ghost commanded that the church at Antioch should ordain Barnabas and Saul for the work of carrying the Gospel to the Gentiles. Saul kept in the foreign missionary work until he died in Rome, the capital of the world, about seventeen years later. Those professed Christians who are opposed to foreign missions ought to be informed that they are opposing the work originated by the Holy Ghost. Holiness and foreign missions are forever linked together. A man filled with the Holy Ghost will always be interested in this work originated by the Holy Ghost. No man filled with the Spirit, can be opposed or indifferent to this great work originated by the Holy Spirit.

This chapter is full of incidents in the history of the inaugurating of foreign missions. Let us note these historic events.

The place of the birth of foreign missions was the Gentile church at Antioch. It seems there were quite a number of prophets and teachers in Antioch. All who have the fullness of the blessing feel the mighty impulse to go and tell the world the glad tidings. This is the characteristic of the experience. No doubt this church was fasting and praying (Vs. 2 and 3) for divine guidance. Fasting in the New Testament was always appointed for some special purpose. They were no set regular fasts. It was only in special emergencies. There is no merit in fasting of itself. It, like prayer, is a means to an end. With the great world before them, no wonder they wanted special light as to where they should begin.

While they were ministering to the Lord—not preaching, nor offering mass, as Catholic interpreters have tried to make it appear,—the Holy Ghost spoke to them. This shows that the Holy Ghost is a person of the Godhead—not an influence as some people seem to think. We do not know in what manner the Holy Ghost spoke to them. But we know from this that the Holy Ghost calls men to be missionaries. They get their authority, not from men but from God. The missionaries, Saul and Barnabas, did not go until the church had recognized the call and set them apart. There was no “Come-out-ism” in their work. They worked through the regular orderly methods of the church.

So they laid their hands upon them. The ceremony of the laying on of hands was a symbol expressing the thought that the church was bestowing its blessing upon them. Notice the church gave something more precious than money. It gave its two best men to the foreign missionary cause. In these days there seems to be more stress laid upon raising money than men. It takes the very best men to make good foreign missionaries.

“They, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost.” Vs. 2. It says in Vs. 3 that the church sent them. The fact is both the church and the Holy Spirit worked together. The Holy Spirit sent them through the church. So we learn the great truth that the Holy Ghost works through the church. This is a direct proof of this fact.

## THE FIRST FOREIGN MISSION WORK. Vs. 5-13.

5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to *their* minister.

6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name *was* Bar-jesus:

7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

9 Then Saul, (who also *is called* Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, *thou* child of the devil, *thou* enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.

They embarked at Seleucia, the sea port of Antioch, fifteen miles distant, and sailed out into the Mediterranean Sea to the island of Cyprus, which was about sixty miles west. This must have delighted Barnabas for Cyprus was his native country. (See Chapter 4:36.) They landed at Salamis, on the eastern coast, and passed through the island—it was about one hundred and forty miles long. They finally reached Paphos, a sea port on the western coast, and there in that heathen city began their preaching to the Gentiles. Paphos was renowned in Grecian mythology as the place where Venus arose from the sea. There was a temple here to the licentious, vile worship of Venus.

The first contest that Jesus had after being baptized and thus qualified for his life work, was with Satan. Evil spirits also entered into men at the time to oppose his work. James and Jambres, the magicians of Pharaoh, opposed Moses at the beginning of his work. So here as Paul is about to begin his missionary

work, he is opposed by a magician, who was not unlike a modern fortune teller, except that he claimed to have control over the inferior demons. No doubt they did have much help from the devil as modern spiritualism does. Kings and governors of that day thought it necessary to have such men in their employ and were greatly influenced by them.

The proconsul (or deputy), who was appointed by the Roman government to rule the island, had one of these magicians in his court, upon whom he depended a great deal. This magician was a renegade Jew named Bar-Jesus—the word means Son of Jesus). This man in his arrogance had styled himself Elymas, an Arabic word meaning *wise man*.

Critics of the Bible have denied that this island colony had the dignity imposed on it, of a proconsulate, and have said the writer was mistaken, and hence that this is a proof that the account is not inspired. But a passage has been found written by a heathen writer which says it was governed by proconsuls, and coins have been found applying the name proconsul to the government of Cyprus. This is like the other attempts to disprove the inspiration of the Bible.

This man like the craftsmen of Chapter 19:27 felt that his business was endangered by the preaching of the Gospel by Paul. Every evil business gets into conflict with the real Gospel. Bar-Jesus saw that the intelligent, prudent, honest-hearted proconsul was likely to be a convert and so he opposed Paul. The Holy Spirit had been, according to his usual method, convicting him and so he listened to Paul hoping for that satisfaction of soul which heathendom had not given him. Religious teachers who can not give their people the satisfaction of soul and sense of salvation that true religion gives, need not be surprised if they go where they can get it. If we were a preacher and could not hold our people, who went to hear holiness preaching, we would either give them this soul satisfying Gospel, or quit preaching.

Here at the beginning of this first missionary journey we first hear the great apostle called Paul instead of Saul. He probably had both names from childhood, as he was both a Jew and a Roman citizen (Acts 22:3). He doubtless, as he was now going to preach to the Gentiles, dropped his Hebrew name, Saul, and



went by his Roman name, Paul, in order to be more acceptable to the Gentiles. There are several in Scripture who had two names, as Simon Peter, and Joses Barnabas (Chapter 4:36). It was a frequent custom among the Jews to take Roman names, after the Romans had conquered Judea. The use of the name Paul shows the change in his life work—his mission to the Gentiles.

Paul "filled with the Holy Ghost" rebuked the sorcerer. There are some people in this day who say that no one was ever filled with the Holy Ghost. This contradicts their assertion. There are others who think that rebuke is harshness and shows that we have not the Spirit if we rebuke. But Paul was filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke very sharply to this man. Stephen was a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost and he rebuked the Sanhedrim and actually called them "stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears." (Acts 7:51.) Peter, a man whose heart had been purified at Pentecost, rebuked another pretended sorcerer, Simon Magus (Acts 8:20-22). (The difference between this man Elymas and Simon Magus was the latter repented or at least appeared to do so.) Paul calls Bar-Jesus "son of the devil." So we learn that the devil has children as well as the Lord. Jesus said the same thing. (John 8:44.) Notice the characteristics of a son of the devil—"full of all subtilty and deceit, enemy of all righteousness." A "perverter of the right ways of the Lord." (Vs. 10.) What a combination of wickedness was in this renegade Jew! What a consummation of total depravity! Paul charges him with perverting "the right ways of the Lord." This is the most dangerous of all the attacks made upon the cause of God. The right ways of the Lord are the doctrines of the Holy Spirit cleansing the heart from all sin and filling it and leading, inspiring and communing with man. He had perverted this doctrine and made it into fortune telling and pretended communication with the spirit-world. He was on a par with modern spiritism which claims to hold communion with the spirit world, thus perverting the right ways of the Lord. The most dangerous fanaticism and heresies are those that embody enough truth to deceive and are just enough tinctured with error to make them fatal to souls. Satan transforms himself into an angel of light. No one will bite a bare hook. So the devil baits

the hook of heresy with just enough truth to cover the point of danger.

The judgment of God fell immediately upon the man. He was stricken with temporary blindness, symbolical of the darkness and blindness he had been seeking to lead others into. This ought to admonish those who seek to lead souls away from the truth.

At the beginning of every great epoch God has seen fit to allow miracles to be performed, to properly accredit the work. And so here we have the instance of Elymas stricken with sudden blindness to convince the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, who was by this means led to believe.

John Mark, the writer of the Gospel of St. Mark, now left them and returned to Jerusalem. "No reason is assigned for this departure; that it seemed unreasonable to Paul and an evidence of weakness, irresolution, or lack of faith is evident from the apostle's refusal to take him as a traveling companion on the second missionary tour (Chapter 15:37-38). Various explanations have been proposed; as that he feared the hazardous journey; that he hesitated to commit himself to the work of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles; that he was offended because Barnabas, who was a relative of Mark, no longer held the paramount place, which was henceforth held by Paul; that his mother dwelt at Jerusalem (Chapter 12:12) and that fear and filial love combined to call him back. However this may be, if he was, as verse 5 implies, the agent and servant of Paul and Barnabas, having charge of all arrangements for their entertainment, etc., and answering to the modern courier, his departure would have necessarily involved great personal inconvenience to them, and a serious embarrassment in their work, quite adequate to account for Paul's subsequent unwillingness to take him again in the same capacity." (Abbott.) In the latter part of Paul's ministry Mark worked with him and was much esteemed by him (2 Tim. 4:11).

#### THE SECOND MISSION WORK. Vs. 14-52.

14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.

15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of

the synagogue sent unto them, saying, *Ye men and brethren*, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.

16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with *his* hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.

17 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.

18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.

19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.

20 And after that he gave *unto them* judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

21 And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

22 And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

23 Of this man's seed hath God according to *his* promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:

24 When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not *he*. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of *his* feet I am not worthy to loose.

26 Men *and* brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled *them* in condemning *him*.

28 And though they found no cause of death *in him*, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a sepulchre.

30 But God raised him from the dead:

31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.

32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,

33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, *now* no

more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.

35 Wherefore he saith also in another *psalm*, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption :

37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

38 Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins :

39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets ;

41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish : for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.

43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas : who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

44 And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you : but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord : and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.

51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.

52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

They now sailed from Paphos to Perga on the main land, and from Perga they went one hundred miles north to another Antioch situated in Pisidia. When the Sabbath day came they went into the Jewish synagogue to worship.

It was customary after the passage in the Old Testament for the day had been read, to invite strangers who were Rabbis to speak. So the board of elders, who ruled the synagogues, who were doubtless on the platform, sent an invitation to Paul to speak. Paul stood up and beckoning with his hand, gave his first recorded address, or sermon. He addressed the sermon as will be seen to two classes—"Men of Israel," or those who were Hebrews and "ye that fear God" or proselytes. Many Gentiles as we have seen before had become worshippers of Jehovah and were called *proselytes*. It is interesting to compare this first recorded sermon of Paul with the sermon of Stephen (Acts 7) and the sermons of Peter in Acts second, third and fourth chapters, and notice how closely all these preachers stuck to the Scriptures which they made the basis of their sermons. Here we get a lesson on how to address those, who do not see things as we do. Paul started his argument with that which the hearers and himself both believed—the Scriptures. Unless we can start on the common level of that which others and ourselves believe, it will be impossible to reach them. When Bishop Taylor preached to the heathen, he began with the moral law, which the consciences of his hearers apprehended, and gradually led them to see the need of the Gospel. It would have been a mistake to have started with them by taking a text from Scripture.

So Paul begins his sermon by quoting Old Testament history. "The beginning of this discourse, verses 17, 18, 19, has Greek words which are both rare and altogether peculiar to the Scripture ("*exalted,*" "*suffered their manners*" and "*divided by lot*") of which the first occurs in Isaiah 1:2 and is translated there "*brought up,*" the second and third in Deut. 1:31, 38. And moreover, these two chapters, Deut. 1 and Isaiah 1 are to this day read on one Sabbath; whence it is sufficiently certain that both were read on that very Sabbath, and in Greek; and that Paul referred especially to that reading of Moses and the prophets mentioned in verse 15. For even the mention of the Judges

(Vs. 20) agrees with the lesson Isaiah 1:26, and the Jews were wont to take their discourses or their beginnings from the Sabbath lesson in the synagogue." (Bengel.) Preachers filled with the Holy Ghost are intensely scriptural in their preaching. So Paul tells them that God chose them and raised them up, when they were crushed under the slavery of Egypt; brought them out of Egypt and nourished them for forty years in the wilderness; destroyed the seven nations—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. These nations had become very wicked and God had to punish them, through the people, Israel. God punishes nations in this world. God divided the land thus rid of the seven nations among his people, and then gave them judges to rule over them until the days of the prophets, of whom Samuel was the first of the regular line of prophets—i. e., teachers which ran on in unbroken succession down to the time that the Jews were carried away captive into Babylon. Then he gave them a king—Saul—for forty years, succeeded by David—a man after God's own heart. And from David's stock God brought the Saviour Jesus. Paul thus by a review of the Old Testament history brought his hearers from Israel in Egypt down the stream of history for 1,500 years, to the time of Jesus, and showed them that Jesus was given "according to promise." So Paul took the Old Testament to lead these Jews to Christ. A scriptural ministry will always be a successful ministry.

He shows that Jesus came when John had first preached the baptism of repentance. Jesus did not begin to preach until John had finished his ministry and had been imprisoned. John preached to all Israel—not to the Gentiles. Both Jesus and John preached only to the *church*. Some in our days object to preaching much to the church. But Jesus and John did it. They never preached to the outside world until the church was entirely sanctified at Pentecost.

John fulfilled his course (Vs. 25). His ministry of preaching was all completed. But Jesus' ministry is still going on and will go on until his second coming. He is now preaching through his church to the world. Having arrived in the discussion at the time of John the Baptist, he reminds them that John had testified of Jesus and they had heard him so testify.

Paul now tells them the Jesus, whom God had raised from the

dead was now offered to them as a Saviour, while the rulers because they did not know Jesus nor recognize him as prophesied in the prophets which they read every Sabbath day, had condemned Jesus, just as their own prophecies in which they read every Sabbath day in their synagogues had foretold. They were reading the scriptures that had foretold the very thing they would do—condemn Jesus. We have here a very significant lesson that men may read and study the scriptures a great deal, to little or no advantage or purpose. The Jews did not see at all Jesus in the Old Testament. It is true too that we live in a day of great study of the Bible and how few really see the Holy Spirit and his work in the Bible! How few see holiness, the central idea of the Bible! Thousands of people today interpret the Bible as the Jews did, in accordance with their own prejudices and preconceived notions. The great deliverance from sin of which the Bible constantly speaks is looked upon as a fanaticism by thousands of zealous Bible students.

The first indictment then that Paul had against the Jerusalem Jews and their rulers was that they were too prejudiced to interpret the scripture honestly and so failed to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. The second indictment was that they were so prejudiced against him, as to demand his death when they found no cause in him for death. Even Pilate, a Roman, said, "I find no fault in him."

But Paul says notwithstanding they had crucified and buried him, God raised him from the dead, and thus vindicated him.

Thus he lays a solid foundation of scriptural argument to enable him to say without fear of contradiction that he brought the good tidings—that the promises made to their fathers could be fulfilled to their children.

Paul now goes on to state for the first time on record his theology concerning justification by faith, which is the great doctrine by which Paul is best known, which he so clearly states and proves in his Epistle to the Romans. To be justified is to be acquitted and pardoned in the court of Heaven. This God does because he accepts the sacrifice of Jesus, our substitute. The condition of justification is our faith. Men under the law had

been seeking to be justified by their good works. This was under the Old Testament dispensation—the law of Moses.

Having now brought his sermon down to justification by faith through Jesus Christ, he now closes his sermon with an exhortation, bidding them beware lest they reject the Gospel and perish. Their danger was lest they might be angry because it was offered to every one, Jew and Gentile alike. He quotes from Habakkuk 1:5, to enforce his warning, “As if he had said ‘Be on your guard, lest, by rejecting the salvation I have now offered you in the name of the Messiah, you should call down judgment upon yourselves as fearful and incredible as those predicted by Habakkuk and inflicted by the hands of the Chaldeans upon our unbelieving father.’” (Alexander.) Here we get an illustration of the way we may use the Old Testament in preaching.

The sermon took effect for many of the Jews and proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, after they left the synagogue, and accepted the truth. And Paul and Barnabas persuaded them by additional instruction and exhortations to “remain in the grace of God.” This means that they had come into the grace of God by believing the Gospel that they had heard. It also means that they could have fallen from grace if they wished.

So great was the interest created by this service that almost the whole city came out the next Sabbath to hear the word. This made the Jews very angry. It was very difficult for the Jews to allow any liberty to the Gentiles to hear the Gospel. They were not willing to accord them the same religious privileges that they had themselves. Race and sectional prejudices are traits of the carnal mind. So they opposed Paul and Silas. This is the way the carnal mind works. Their arguments were offered because of their envy and hatred of the Gentiles—not because they had any good argument against the truth.

But Paul and Barnabas being filled with the Spirit, instead of being frightened only grew bolder, and told them that it was their duty to offer the Gospel to them first, but having done their duty, now, they offered it to the Gentiles, seeing the Jews to whom it was first offered refused to receive it. They had judged themselves unworthy to receive it. They had refused it. In Luke 14:15-24 by a parable Jesus had shown that the Jews had re-



ceived the first call and made excuse and now God was going to excuse them from having it, taking them at their word that they did not want it, and henceforth they would turn to the Gentiles. They showed that this had been prophesied by Isaiah. (Isa. 49:6.)

The Gentile hearers rejoiced at this, "And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." This text has been the great occasion of controversy between Calvinism and Arminianism. It seems to mean, not predestination, but effectual calling of those who believe. No man can believe except God predispose his heart to believe. Even then he may refuse to believe and accept the light. "We know that it is God who worketh in us the will to believe, and that the preparation of the heart is of Him: but to find in this text preordination to life asserted is to force both the word and the context to a meaning which they do not contain." (Alford.) No wonder that the word of God was "published" by these Gentiles throughout that region! And no wonder persecution arose. It always does where there is a real work of grace, for the devil and the carnal mind both hate the truth. The persecution was originated and carried on by the women of high position. The women seemed to have influenced the men in this matter. When women are good, they are very good and *vice versa*. Persecution always helps a good cause. God's cause has always flourished best when most persecuted. Here we have a fact illustrating that which has always proved true, as seen in the modern holiness movement that when the truth first gets a fair hearing men embrace it and extol it until it runs counter to their prejudices or sins. Then persecution begins.

So Paul and Barnabas were expelled from this country; first called Christians in Antioch of Syria and first expelled from the city of Antioch in Pisidia. They shook off the dust from their feet. This was a custom among the Jews. When they returned from a foreign country they shook off the dust from their feet as a token that they were separated entirely from it. Jesus told his disciples to do the same thing. (See Matt. 10:14.) So they departed to Iconium, a city a little distance south and west—not because they were afraid, but because Jesus had commanded, when persecuted in one city to flee to another.

The disciples—that is, the new converts as well as Paul and

Barnabas "were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost." That is what God does for his persecuted people. Let no one pity a Spirit-filled man that is persecuted. God always gives a special blessing to such. When we hear people whining about their persecutions, we know they are not filled with the Holy Ghost, for if they had, their tribulations would not be worth speaking of, because of the great glory in them. Whining shows we are persecuted for our own sake and not for the sake of Jesus and the truth. Jesus told his people what to do when persecuted—"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad." (Matt. 5:11, 12.) He who fails to get the blessing especially promised in persecution, has evidently not had any spiritual blessing with his persecution.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### HOLINESS AND FOREIGN MISSIONS (Continued).

#### COMPLETION OF THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

Vs. 1-28.

1 And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.

2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.

3 Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.

5 And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use *them* despitefully, and to stone them,

6 They were ware of *it*, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about:

7 And there they preached the gospel.

8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:

9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.

13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.

14 *Which* when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard *of*, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn

from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein :

16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

19 And there came thither *certain* Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city : and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch.

22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.

25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia :

26 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.

This chapter is a continuation of the missionary tour of Paul and Barnabas. It is not known how long they remained at Iconium. But they met with the same treatment that effective preachers of the gospel meet—success and opposition. The two go together. They who injure the devil's kingdom must expect him to show resentment. If we never meet with any opposition in our testimony and preaching, we may be sure that we are accomplishing very little in the war against sin no matter how successful we may appear to be. We can generally judge of the results of a revival, not only from the number of converts, but

from the opposition that the revival arouses. Here we see the revival had both converts and opposition—"A great multitude, both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren." It has ever been the case that ecclesiasticism has been the greatest foe of Holy Ghost religion and has stirred the unbelieving world against it. Who opposed Wesley and Whitefield, and Finney and others most? Ecclesiastics.

The enemies evidently, when signs and wonders were given by God to testify to the genuineness of the gospel which the disciples preached, accused the disciples of being possessed by evil spirits, who did these miracles through them. This was the charge that was brought against Jesus, when he performed miracles.

The antagonism to Paul and Barnabas finally became so great that they were about to assault them. They fled to Lystra and Darbe, cities not far distant. Thus they fulfilled the command of Jesus, when persecuted in one city, they were to flee to another. Timothy was a native of Lystra. Probably he was converted at this time.

They began their ministry there by the healing of a cripple, just as Peter began his ministry with the healing of the lame man in the temple (Acts 3:2). Miracles have been the credentials that God has given his ambassadors at the beginning of every dispensation. Moses wrought miracles at the beginning of the dispensation of the law. Jesus performed miracles at the inauguration of the gospel dispensation and the apostles wrought miracles at this the beginning of the Holy Ghost dispensation. It was necessary in those days to show that the new dispensation was of God. This having been proven it is no more necessary to authenticate the present dispensation of which this was the beginning. So we are not to expect miracles in our day. The miracles of the Bible were performed to help humanity. They were entirely different from the feats of legerdemain, and wonders of false religions, performed for no purpose of blessing to any one. The very character of the miracles of Scripture is a proof of their divinity. So Paul performed the miracle of healing this lame man. He saw that the lame man had faith to be healed. So

he said with a loud voice, "Stand upright" and the man did so. When Peter healed the lame man at the gate of the temple he took him by the hand and lifted him to encourage his faith. This man evidently had strong faith that only needed the encouragement of a voice. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of faith. The Bible puts great stress upon it. Jesus honored faith in his earthly ministry, no matter who the person was who had it.

The people when they saw the miracle, said that Paul and Barnabas were gods come down from heaven. This was in accordance with their religious views. They believed their own deities sometimes came down to earth. So they called Barnabas, Jupiter and Paul, Mercury. They considered in their mythology Jupiter as the king of the gods and Mercury his messenger. "Observe here that it is Barnabas and not Paul, who is regarded as Jupiter, and compare this with the statement of Paul's enemies that his bodily presence was weak (2 Cor. 10:10). Hence we may reasonably surmise that he was of small stature. Of his power as a speaker, the Book of Acts affords many illustrations."

So the priests of Jupiter brought an oxen decked with garlands to sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas, which would have been done if Paul had not rent his garments, which was a token of grief, and ran out among the multitude. He was horror-stricken to think of having worship given to him. The true preacher of Jesus Christ will take no honor or worship to himself. How different the great apostle to the Gentiles from the pope and preachers who receive homage from men! They are only men of like passions with other men!

How adroitly and naturally Paul turns this incident into the text for a sermon on the goodness and providential care of God! The first thing in his sermon is the declaration that God created the world. This was a new, strange doctrine to them, as they believed generally that matter was uncreated, and hence eternal. The way to preach to heathen is to show them the evidences of the creator in his handiwork in nature.

But the people were very fickle. Perhaps not more so according to their light than mankind in general, for it was not but a

few days later when the same crowd, that had wanted to sacrifice to them, tried to kill Paul. And all this revulsion of feelings and hatred was caused by the professed church of God—the Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and persuaded these Gentiles to stone Paul. We see their vindictiveness and hatred in following Paul from city to city: Ungodly ecclesiasticism has ever been the foe of the Gospel in every age. It has ever persecuted the saints and incited the world to do the same. Pilate would never have crucified Jesus if an ungodly church had not urged him on. So they stoned Paul, as they did Stephen, and supposing him dead dragged him out of the city. But God was not through with him. “A man is immortal until his work is done.” As the disciples stood about him, he arose. God restored him to life. This is perhaps the time when he was caught up into the third heaven and had a revelation of divine glory which he mentions in 2 Cor. 12:1-4. God must have given him strength to come into the city immediately and be as well apparently as before. Some think his eyesight was injured at this time and never fully restored, and that this weakness of the eyes as “the thorn in the flesh” of which he speaks in 2 Cor. 12:7. His courage however did not fail him, for he reëntered the city again (Vs. 21). So he departed for a season to Derbe.

Notice on their return to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, they used an entirely different ministry. They gave their especial attention to the work of “confirming the souls of the disciples.” On their first visit, their attention was given to the work of making disciples, the second time it was to confirm them.

There is reason to believe that this confirmation was the same as the confirmation that apostles gave to the converts at Samaria. It was the ministry of their receiving the Holy Ghost. It is quite evident (as we have had occasion to remark before) that the rite of confirmation as practiced in the Roman Catholic, Episcopal and several other churches is the fossil remains of the giving of the Holy Ghost to those already regenerate; and that the disciples taught them to pray and believe for this gift. This was doubtless what they did and is what is meant by “confirming the souls of the disciples.” The rite of confirmation as administered in the Roman Catholic Church has some marked allusions to this. Oil,

the emblem of the Holy Spirit, is put on the forehead of the candidate and he is said to have received the power to be a perfect Christian.

They also exhorted the disciples to "continue in the faith"—to live a life of faith in Jesus, the son of God. And not only that, but they also explained to them that God's appointed way for all his children is to enter heaven through tribulation. A careful reading of Paul's own letter to the Romans, chapter 5:1-5, will show that Paul understood this to be the divine order as we have just described it: justification by faith; entrance into the grace whereby "we stand" (sanctification) also by faith; then glorying in tribulation. He tells in Vs. 3-5 why we should glory in tribulation, because it works patience and other graces. Then Paul and Barnabas selected elders for each individual church. A church is an assemblage of individuals called out of the world. There must be system, or no body of individuals can exist or do effective work. God has always blessed organized effort. So they prayed and fasted and set these elders before the Lord, asking his blessing upon them and their labors over the flock. (See parallel passage in Acts 20:28.) This ordination was evidently a formal, religious service, most suitable to impress upon both the elders and the people the solemn responsibilities of their office. "Thus the young disciples were not left long without systematic organizations. For edification and defense, each community was constituted a corporation, and in each corporation elders were ordained. It was on the second visit of the missionaries that this was done. An interval was permitted to elapse that the fittest men might emerge; and already the rule 'Lay hands suddenly on no man' was practiced, before it was prescribed." (Arnot.)

So they returned to Antioch from which place the church had sent them forth by direction of the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:1-3) and thus completed the first missionary journey. They were absent between two and three years. Only the most important events of their mission are given in chapters 13 and 14. The church gathered together in the first special missionary meeting ever held. Such meetings are still of great interest to holy people. Today such meetings are as full of inspiration as when the



church gathered to hear the report of Paul and Silas, as to how God had opened the door of salvation to the Gentiles or heathen, as we would call them today; Paul and Barnabas remained about two years at Antioch. Paul was by no means idle while remaining in Antioch.



## CHAPTER XV.

### THE SYMBOLISM OF HOLINESS REALIZED.

The Attitude of Mere Symbolism Towards Holiness. Vs. 1-6.  
The Meaning of the Symbol. Vs. 7-12. Holiness Puts All  
Disciples on a Level. Vs. 13-41.

### THE ATTITUDE OF MERE SYMBOLISM TOWARDS HOLINESS. Vs. 1-6.

1 And certain men which came down from Judæa taught the brethren *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and *of* the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees, which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.

6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

We have seen in chapter 11 that there had already sprung up in the church a party who believed that circumcision was a requisite to salvation. They had already called Peter to account for mingling in social equality with the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius. Now certain men of the same party, members of the church at Jerusalem, came down to Antioch and told the saved brethren there that they could not be saved unless they were circumcised.

This they did on their own account. The church at Jerusalem had not sent them. It is one of the most singular things in the world that people can not mind their own business, but want to make their neighbors come to their standard. But so it is. A great many people want to own the souls of others and make them think, believe and act just as they do.

This ritualistic party has never since died out of the church. But has been perpetuated through all the centuries. It is always opposed to spirituality in the church. It does not oppose the second work of grace because it is a second work, but because it is spiritual rather than ritualistic. It does not like real regeneration any better, but rests its salvation on the external forms of religion—not circumcision now, to be sure, but baptism, church membership, good works, humanitarianism and sociology. All these are given prominence and preeminence. Hence we find in many churches, on the members of official boards, men who are not spiritual, and who give no more evidence of spiritual life than the outside world. They go to church and pay their dues and that is the substance of their religion. But alas! they have the controlling voice as to who shall be the preacher, how he shall preach and how much spirituality if any the church shall have.

This ritualistic party at Jerusalem, was not spiritual. So they could not see any providential leading in the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the Gentiles, who had not been circumcised. An unspiritual man never sees when and how the Spirit of God is working or whom he is endorsing. He sticks to his old traditions that he had while in the world. He never encourages spiritual advances in the movements of God in the church and the world. Paul in Galatians says of these troublers in the church who came down from Jerusalem that they were "False brethren unawares brought in." All they got out of circumcision was the mere form. It meant no more to them than water baptism means to most people, who get no idea that it represents the washing away of sin.

#### THE MEANING OF THE SYMBOL. Vs. 7-12.

7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men *and* brethren, ye know how that a good while ago

God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us;

9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

Moses had clearly told them that circumcision symbolized the cleansing of the heart from sin. In Deut. 30:6 he had said, "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord, thy God, with all thine heart." Jeremiah had also shown that circumcision has a spiritual meaning, saying "All the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart." Paul in Colosians explains this, showing that this circumcision was the purification of the heart, as he speaks of "the circumcision made without hands in putting off the body of the flesh through the circumcision of Christ." He tells the Romans that "circumcision is that of the heart and in the spirit and not in the letter." Here then was a strange state of affairs: A party declaring it was impossible to be saved unless a certain symbol was practiced, and at the same time not believing in the experience of holiness that was symbolized by it.

"These Pharisees arose up at this time in the assembly, and demanded that these Gentile converts be circumcised and required to keep the whole law; in other words, that they must become Jews before they could be Christians. Humanly speaking, the future of the church depended upon the decision of this question. If the Pharisaic party had triumphed, the Christian church would have been buried in the grave of Judaism." (Abbott.)

So the church at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to see if the church at Jerusalem felt the same as these few brethren who had come to Antioch, disturbing their peace.

This was the first time that Paul had met any of the apostles at Jerusalem except Peter and James. (See Gal. 1:18, 19.)

These Jerusalem Jews thought the Gentiles were not consecrated to God because they were not circumcised. Peter stands up and tells them that God bore them witness that they were consecrated by purifying their hearts, not by circumcision but by faith. The gift of the Holy Ghost proved that God was with them.

“Purifying their hearts by faith.” This is one of the most important statements in the New Testament. It shows that religious forms are nothing in themselves, if they are not accompanied by faith. It teaches that we must judge of a work that God blesses to be divine, no matter whether it agrees with our prejudices or not. The great lesson it teaches is that the blessing which the disciples obtained at Pentecost was purity of heart, for Peter says that God gave the people at the house of Cornelius “the Holy Ghost even as he did to us.” They were purified in heart and it was the same (no difference) that the disciples had at the beginning of the dispensation; that is, at Pentecost. We had occasion to show in Acts 10:1-4 that Cornelius was a saved man, at the time he received the purifying baptism. This, any unprejudiced reader would admit. Those who are opposed to the second work of grace, whereby the heart is purified, are the only people, who reject the plain truth that these people were already saved. We quote from Lyman Abbott, a scholar and unprejudiced writer, who probably never had his attention called to the matter of the second definite work. He says, “To the Judeans a refusal to be circumcised was an evidence of imperfect repentance and consecration, as with us a refusal to be baptized or make a public profession of faith. To this unexpressed feeling Peter replies that the heart knowing God has borne witness to *the genuineness of their godly character* (Italics are ours), by giving to them the Holy Ghost.”

We learn also that the heart is purified not by ceremonies, good works, growth, naturalism, purgatory, culture, or evolution, but by faith. Paul also states the same doctrine as Peter in Acts 26:18, “them which are sanctified by faith.” These are the only passages that definitely state the method by which the

heart is purified. Is it not strange that on this important subject with an open Bible there should have been so many theories in the church as to the method by which our hearts are purified? There is no subject on which men ought to be so certain as this, for it is our fitness for heaven that is at stake. Yet many are relying on their own notions instead of the word of God. The ecclesiastical part of the church had only circumcision of the flesh and the Gentiles had circumcision of the heart.

Peter declared to the church that it was tempting God to be displeased with these Gentiles, and to require them to be circumcised whom God had already so greatly blessed. It was putting a religious yoke upon them. Verse 11 is not accurately rendered. It should be rendered, "But through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we trust to be saved, in which way also." Both Jews and Gentiles were saved in the same way—by faith.

#### HOLINESS PUTS ALL DISCIPLES ON A LEVEL. Vs. 13-41.

13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men *and* brethren, hearken unto me :

14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

15 And to this agree the words of the prophets ; as it is written,

16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down ; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up :

17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God :

20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things strangled, and *from* blood.

21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas ; *namely*, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren :

23 And they wrote *letters* by them after this manner ; The apostles

and elders and brethren *send* greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia :

24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, *Ye must* be circumcised, and keep the law : to whom we gave no *such* commandment :

25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell *you* the same things by mouth.

28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things ;

29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication : from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

30 So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch : and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle :

31 *Which* when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed *them*.

33 And after they had tarried *there* a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles.

34 Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.

35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

36 And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they do.

37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.

38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other : and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus ;

40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

James, the brother of Jesus (Galatians 1:19), gave his opinion. It seems James had great influence in the church, for they acted upon his suggestion (Vs. 22). Tradition says that James



was appointed bishop of the church at Jerusalem by Jesus himself. He was not an apostle, and was probably the author of the Epistle of James. He speaks of Peter by his other name, Simeon or Simon. He first of all tells the church that the purpose of the divine visitation was to take out a people from the Gentiles for his name. This explodes the theory that God intends to convert the whole world. The object of the Gospel is to take out a prepared people from the Gentiles as the bride of Christ and then to return to the salvation of the Jews. He puts the salvation of the Jews under the figure of "building again the tabernacle of David." He declares this to be the teaching of the prophets and quotes Amos 9:11-12. This seems to teach that the kingdom of the Jews will be reestablished on earth, after the Gentile dispensation in which we now live, has come to an end. The literal translation of the word tabernacle here is "*hut*." It refers to the fallen condition of the Jews; it was like a delapidated hut until they are restored. He says still farther, "known unto God are all his works." In other words, **this** has been the plan of God from the beginning. The Gentiles saved and taken out of the mass of the Gentiles are to share the kingdom of God with the Jews. Therefore, he says: Let us not trouble the Gentiles and thus seek to interfere with the plans of God. Let us give them the advice to turn from the popular practices of their day and generation, such as idolatry, fornication and the eating of animals that are strangled. The latter practice was against the law of the Jews. To this day, the Jews maintain separate butcher shops in order to see that their meats are killed according to their law. This was according to the five books of Moses—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, which they heard read every Sabbath in the synagogue. In order to avoid discord, they were advised to go according to the Word they heard read each Sabbath. For at this time, the only Bible was the Old Testament, which was read for a long time in their public meetings. Unless they had some acknowledged standard and went by it, the Jewish and Gentile Christians would have dissensions.

The church at Jerusalem sent Paul and Barnabas, Judas and Silas to Antioch to tell the church there that the church at Jerusalem had not authorized these meddlers (Vs 1) to teach that

Gentiles must be circumcised in order to be saved. They also sent a letter stating their opinion in the matter as voiced by St. James. After the letter was read, Judas and Silas exhorted, as they were "prophets themselves."

Paul and Barnabas remained at Antioch for some time, teaching and preaching. Paul after a time suggested to Barnabas that they visit the brethren with whom they had labored in their former missionary trip, to see how they were prospering.

Barnabas proposed to take with them Mark, who had been with them a part of the time in the last missionary trip. Paul decidedly objected because Mark had deserted them in the former trip (Acts 13:13). Barnabas insisted and Paul insisted, and so in order to be harmonious, they separated. This shows that good men, separated to the work of the ministry by the Holy Ghost as these men were, might honestly differ. Unity does not mean a loss of individuality. We may differ with people and be obliged to take a stand against them and yet love them. We find Paul still loved Barnabas and Mark, although obliged to differ with them, for he later refers kindly to Barnabas in 1 Cor. 9:6, and sends greetings to Mark (See 2 Tim. 4:11). Let us learn the lesson that we may differ with people and yet really love them.

So Paul and Barnabas "agreed to disagree." God overruled their disagreement to the good of the cause in the spread of the Gospel, for Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, his native country and no doubt helped spread Christianity there, and Paul took Silas to help him in his missionary work in Europe. So instead of two, there were four workers in the field. Two by two seems to be the most effective method of spreading the Gospel. Jesus sent out his workers that way. One becomes a help to the other in such cases. A worker needs advice and counsel.

It will be noticed in verse 40 that the church recommended Paul as he went forth. But it says nothing of the sort about Barnabas. It would seem by this that Paul was in the right in the controversy in the estimation of the church.

Again it says they went "confirming the churches"—no doubt as we have shown (Acts 14:22), preaching the second work of grace.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### A SPIRIT FILLED AND LED MAN.

**The Preparation. Vs. 1-5. The Leading of the Holy Spirit.  
Vs. 6-12. The Result. Vs. 13-40.**

#### THE PREPARATION. Vs. 1-5.

1 Then came he to Derbe and Lystra : and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed ; but his father *was* a Greek :

2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him ; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters : for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

The Apostle Paul had been filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 9:17), and henceforth was led by the Spirit. He was now in his second missionary journey. He started out from Antioch, as we see in chapter 15:41, through Syria and Cilicia, and came to Derbe and Lystra where he had been before (Chapter 14:6). Here he added Timothy to his company of traveling companions. We learn from this and other passages, who Timothy was. His father was a Greek and his mother, a Jewess. We learn from 2 Tim. 1:5 that his grandmother's name was Lois. His mother, grandmother and himself were all Christians. He was a man of delicate health, for Paul wrote him in 1 Timothy 5:23 to "use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities." He was well versed in the scriptures from boyhood for Paul says "from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures." (2 Tim. 3:15.) He was probably converted in Paul's first series of meet-

ings there. Paul resolved to take him as a traveling companion, but evidently, not unless he had carefully inquired as to his character, for verse 2 says he was "well reported of by the brethren." Paul had him circumcised. This has been a hard matter for some to reconcile with the actions of the church council in the previous (15th) chapter. But it need not be hard to understand if it is remembered that his mother was a Jewess, and his father was probably dead. To have taken an uncircumcised Jew with him in his travels would have hindered Paul's mission, for the Jews would have been angry when Paul preached, for him to take Timothy, an uncircumcised Jew, into their synagogues. Timothy was ordained as a preacher by the laying on of the hands of the elders (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6).

So Paul, Silas and Timothy went throughout the churches that had been established by Paul and Barnabas in their former journey (See Chapter 15:36). As they went they delivered the decree of the church, spoken of in Acts 15:23-29. This was the means of establishing the churches for it set their doubts and fears at rest on the subject of circumcision, which had troubled them. Because of this establishment of faith the church increased in numbers daily. A peaceful Holy Ghost church means a prosperous church.

#### THE LEADING BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. Vs. 6-12.

6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,

7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia : but the Spirit suffered them not.

8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.

9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night : There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next *day* to Neapolis ;

12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, *and* a colony : and we were in that city abiding certain days.

In a few words (Vs. 6) here is given an account of the great work they carried on in the country of Phrygia and Galatia. It was the work of months no doubt. It is a sample of the unwritten history of the Bible. They now attempted to go into Bythinia, another country of Asia Minor, but were forbidden by the Holy Ghost. It does not tell how they were forbidden. It might have been by some special providence or by direct communication. Then they went to Mysia and tried to go into Bythinia and "the Spirit suffered them not." No doubt they were perplexed, as one sometimes is, at the strange leadings of the Spirit, but it was all for the divine glory in having the Gospel carried into Europe, as they were now in Asia. God never makes mistakes. He leads just right, although we can not see it at the time. But everything will be cleared and made plain in due time. "Paul was made to understand the mind of the Spirit, and—the only real point of rational interest—he obeyed it. And, to everyone cherishing this same obedient spirit, the mind of God will in some assured way be made known. *Why* their proposed movements were thus divinely hedged round on every side save the sea, is clearly intimated in the summons that so soon followed: to cross the sea, and enter Europe. So plainly it appeared that the Gospel's first marked entrance into Europe was definitely directed by the Lord."

So they passed by Mysia and came down to Troas. Troas was a city on the sea coast, on or near the foundation of ancient Troy. Paul was on historic ground. It was here that Achilles had performed his heroic deeds. It was here that Alexander, the world's conqueror, had landed to conquer Asia. But the conquest of Europe by Paul, the leader of the Army of the Cross, was a mightier enterprise, and this crossing of the sea by Paul was to result in greater achievements than those of the heroes of antiquity. The great result of Paul's invasion of Europe was mightier and further reaching. Paul himself could hardly have known how significant his advent into Europe was.

He had thus far been led by the Spirit, he knew not why or how. But now he is directly informed of his mission and duty: God does not keep his workmen always in the dark. He lets them know at the right time his purposes. It inspires a subordinate to have some general notions of the campaign. Paul was a subor-

dinate. His commander in the skies by a vision let him know that he was to go into the provinces of Europe. The churches at Thessalonica and Galatia were the result of his crossing over to Europe. And the church universal has the two epistles to the Corinthians, the two to the Thessalonians and that to the Galatians as the result.

We are told this time, just how the Holy Spirit guided him. It was by a vision. A man of Macedonia appeared to him in a vision and said, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." Such leadings and visions have been known to God's servants in modern times. How the prayer of the man of Macedonia must have touched the heart of the great apostle. "The vision is still perpetuated. The cry of humanity in its sense of need—its guilt and wretchedness, its helpless, hopeless despair—is still sounding now from East to West, as then from West to East. It comes from every heathen continent, and from the many islands to the church of every region, and to the Christians of every name." (Brown.) The cry is still ringing from heathen lands in the ears of the church and it is spiritual death to the church that does not heed it. Paul was sure that the import of the vision was that he should cross the sea to the mainland of Europe and preach there the gospel. We notice now a change in the manner of writing the narrative. Hitherto the account has been written in the third person. Now it is written in the second person. "Immediately *we* endeavored to go." By this it is evident that Luke the writer had now joined them to be their traveling companion hereafter. The account of their adventures will hereafter be more vivid. Some think Luke, being a physician, joined them to look after Paul's health, that had become broken.

So they embarked at Troas and went by a straight course to Neapolis, a distance of eighty miles, in two days. Neapolis was the sea-port of Philippi, from which it was ten miles distant. So the company now consisted of four men—Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke. "And these four men go on board the vessel—Paul with his fervent zeal and his strong intellect; Silas with his zeal and his prophetic gifts; Luke with his scholarly culture and professional accomplishments; and Timothy with his youthful earnestness and as yet undeveloped powers for work. *These four men*

guided by the Divine Spirit *came to Europe!* And that ship has in it the seeds of all that is to be developed in the religion and learning, the philosophy, legislation, art, science, and everything else that has made European nations the acknowledged regal masters of the world." (Binney.)

On the plains of Philippi, Anthony and Augustas had fought one of the decisive battles of history, defeating Brutus and Caesar, and Augustus had left a colony there as a memorial of his victory. But Paul, the Jew, was to win a far greater victory, beginning with Philippi and extending over all Europe—setting up the standard of the cross. So they rested several days in the city before beginning their public labors.

#### THE RESULT. Vs. 13-40.

13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted *thither*.

14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us*: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us.

16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

19 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew *them* into the marketplace unto the rulers.

20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,

21 And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat *them*.

23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast *them* into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely :

24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God : and the prisoners heard them.

26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken : and immediately all the doors were opened and every one's bands were loosed.

27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm : for we are all here.

29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,

30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved ?

31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes ; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.

36 And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go : now therefore depart, and go in peace.

37 But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast *us* into prison ; and now do they thrust us out privily ? nay verily ; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.

38 And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates : and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.

39 And they came and besought them, and brought *them* out, and desired *them* to depart out of the city.

40 And they went out of the prison, and entered into *the house* of Lydia : and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

A few days after their arrival they went to a place outside the city by the river side where a prayer meeting was usually held. It seems by this that there were but few Jews in the city,



for the Jews always had synagogues where they were able to support them. Probably it was a female prayer meeting, for they sat down and talked with "the women who resorted thither." So we see the first gospel meetings in Europe were open air meetings. As we read this account there comes to our vision a quiet Sabbath morning, by a placid river; a company of women assembled, to pray. Some strangers appear and talk of salvation by faith. And this first meeting results in the first conversion to Christ in Europe. Paul like his Master could gladly preach to a small congregation. Many preachers will not attempt much unless the crowd is large. Jesus and Paul preached some of their best sermons to a small crowd—one or two individuals.

The first convert in Europe was a woman. Her name was Lydia. She was a business woman, a seller of purple dye—a very popular color. Woman has the peculiar honor of being "last at the cross, first at the sepulchre of Jesus." Woman seems to take to the gospel more readily and naturally than man. No doubt as she had to spend so much time in the home with the cares of the household, she appreciates the nature of religion more than the average man. She sees its need in the training of the children. If she was first in the transgression, she is often first in seeing the value of religion for her children. In many places if it were not for the faithful women, the church of God would be compelled to close its doors.

Lydia was a native of Thyatira, a city of Asia. She was a Gentile. The explanation of Gentiles meeting for a prayer meeting is, that she and the others were Jewish proselytes—converts from heathenism to Judaism.

The Lord opened her heart. Like all human hearts by nature, her depraved heart had been closed to the truth of the Gospel. Only God can open the heart and He did it in this case. What we mean by total depravity is not that man has nothing good in him, but left to himself he never would open his heart to God and his truth. God awakens and convicts men. Paul might have preached his heart out, he could not have opened her heart. Let all preachers and teachers take courage in this fact that God opens men's hearts. The outward manifestations were different in the case of the jailor, but the conviction was the same.

Notice God uses the word of a preacher, one of his instruments in opening men's hearts. We are not to be discouraged if our preaching is simple for the most eloquent preaching avails nothing if God does not open men's hearts. And no matter how much men may extol the preacher, and laud his preaching, it amounts to nothing if God does not by it open men's hearts. Better the childish prattle of the humblest child of God that God uses to open men's hearts, than the most polished and finished oratory of the most eloquent pulpit that falls lifeless on the souls of men.

The conversion of this woman resulted in the conversion of her household who were baptized. She throws open her house for the entertainment of the servants of God. Here is the first example of Christian hospitality of which we have any record. The first example of the most wonderful display of kindness that the world knows anything about. There is no thing like Christian hospitality in all the heathen world. It is the communion of saints. Millions since that time have refreshed both soul and body under the shade of the tree of Christian hospitality, "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love. The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above."

She used an argument in her invitation that Paul could not gainsay or answer in the negative. She was a Gentile and Jews had had no social intercourse with such. She said to Paul, if you really believe I am truly converted, let your company come and stay at my house. Not to have accepted the invitation would imply a lack of confidence in her religion. They who have received spiritual blessing from the servants of God often feel very properly a desire to impart temporal blessing to the messenger. Paul said to the Corinthians, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things is it a great thing that we shall reap your carnal things?"

There never was a genuine work of God long unopposed by the devil. The first convert in Europe was a woman, and now the devil fills another woman, to be used as an instrumentality against the revival begun under the labors of Paul. It was a young woman of an entirely different type of character from Lydia. She was possessed by the spirit of divination or Python.

The heathen god, Apollo, was sometimes called Python. Those who professed to have a spirit of divination were thought to have the spirit of Python. All modern fortune telling, spiritism, etc., is more or less of the devil, who possessed this woman. She cried after Paul, much as the devils did after Jesus when they confessed his deity; probably for the same reason, that it might appear that he was in sympathy and fellowship with her.

Paul was more than "grieved" at this daily exhibition and bore it as long as he thought right and then "in the name of Jesus Christ" commanded the evil spirit to come out of her; and he came out *immediately*. Alford says in the Greek word translated *grieved*, "Not mere annoyance is expressed by this word, but rather holy indignation and sorrow at what he saw and heard; the Christian soldier was goaded to the attack, but the mere satisfaction of anger was not the object any more than the result of the stroke."

No iniquitous business can flourish long in the neighborhood of the real gospel without being rebuked, whether it be fortune telling, the saloon business, black or white slavery or dishonesty, of any kind. And this gospel upset the business of certain men who immediately resisted it by seizing Paul and Silas. Luke and Timothy probably were not found, as Paul and Silas were attacked by the mob, and were consequently not seized.

The master of the damsel brought Paul and Silas before the magistrate and tried to stir up a race-riot, accusing them as Jews of teaching customs unlawful for Romans to practice. They could not have been successful in Athens in making such charges, for Athens was a philosophical and not superstitious like Philippi.

So the mob listened to these charges and were excited against them and the magistrate caused their clothes to be torn from them and commanded that they should be beaten. Paul says in 2 Cor. 11:25, "Thrice was I beaten with rods." This was one of the three times. Later Paul describes it as a shameful occurrence thus, "But even after we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know at Philippi." This shows how keenly he felt the treatment. Salvation is not chloroform that will stupefy us, so that we will not feel insults and abuse, but it will

save us from a spirit of revenge, as we see in Paul's experience in pointing the way of salvation to the penitent jailor.

So they delivered the unfortunate prisoners to the jailor, "charging him to keep them safely. Unjustly condemned and without a trial, their backs lacerated with the cruel whipping, they were cast into prison and their feet made fast in the stocks, they were compelled to sit in this painful posture or lie on their bruised and bleeding backs in the inner prison, surrounded by the filth and vermin customary in prisons of that day. They were put in the stocks as if they were unusually bad criminals.

All through the afternoon and until midnight they were in this painful posture. But it is impossible to put a Spirit-filled man in any position or circumstances where he can not get into communication with the headquarters of his King. And he will do it too.

They did not forget God or murmur at his providences. Some people forsake God because they have a hard time. But Paul and Silas did not omit their evening devotions, but carried them on late into the night. "It is a significant fact that the most joyous of Paul's epistles is that written to the church at Philippi; born out of his experience of suffering." Tertullian says, "Their legs in the stocks pained them not whose souls were in heaven."

They praised God as well as prayed. They might have sung that Psalm, "I waited patiently for the Lord and he inclined unto me and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit." (Psalm 40:1-2.) It takes real salvation to make a man praise God under such circumstances. Any one can praise God when things go to suit him. It takes salvation to praise God when things do not go to suit us.

The way we bear our trials is the evidence to the world that we have real salvation—something the world can not give. Notice it says that their fellow prisoners heard them. Genuine praise of God always convicts the unsaved. A real shout from the heart is one of the great convicting agencies that God has given his church. It puzzles as well as convicts the ungodly.

But Paul and Silas not merely got blessed but God granted a direct answer to their praying. He set them free in a most

remarkable manner. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, that shook the very foundation of the prison, the doors flew open, the stocks were unloosed and the chains fell off the prisoners. One of the decisive battles of history had been fought in that vicinity. The ground had shaken under the tread of mighty armies. But no such power had ever been manifest as the power of this earthquake that had been prayed down. They "prayed through." Half hearted people would have quit praying.

Some people do not believe God answers prayer or caused this earthquake. Who dares say he did not? No one has ever yet told us the cause of earthquakes in general. So they should be very modest in saying that God did not cause this one.

The jailer was waked from his sleep, by the earthquake, and drew his sword to commit suicide for he thought his prisoners were escaped and he knew the severe punishment he must expect.

Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do thyself no harm." That is the message of the Gospel to sinful men, "Do thyself no harm." The sinner is constantly doing himself harm in a thousand ways. Sin is self destructive. The sinner is his own worst enemy. The jailer attempted to commit suicide. The sinner is committing soul suicide. In a thousand ways we see this about us every day. "Do thyself no harm." They surely will do themselves harm when they continue to serve Satan or allow sin to remain in the soul.

Paul did not stop to argue with the jailer on the sinfulness of suicide. But he showed him there was no occasion for it, as the prisoners were all there. There never was a good reason for suicide. Men who commit suicide are either diseased in mind or have lost their faith in God.

The trembling jailer called for a light, brought them out and said, "Sirs what must I do to be saved?" He asked this question, not because of the earthquake, for it was past; not from fear of losing his prisoners, for they had not escaped. He had come very near the invisible world. He knew there was a connection between their prayers and the earthquake. When man gets as near the presence of God as he had come he feels that he is a sinner. He uttered the cry of the ages; the cry that the conscience of guilty men since the days of Cain have been

uttering. To answer this question, men have invented all sorts of religions; built costly temples; offered bloody sacrifices; given the fruit of their bodies to be burned; and tortured their bodies. It is still the cry of guilt, urged on by an accusing conscience.

Paul replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Here we have the question of the ages answered in a sentence. It is just as applicable to our time and men's needs as then. The world can never by any evolution of doctrine or new theology or religion get any other cure for sin—no other way of salvation.

It is because they cast out a devil in the name of Jesus Christ that they had to go to prison. It was very fitting that they should assert the majesty of that name and reinstate it by telling the jailer that he could be saved through that name. It was flinging the challenge in the face of the devil himself.

We see here the difference in the manifestations of the Spirit. Some people have been stumbled because their conversion was not like that of other people, in its manifestations. The question is not, what the manifestations are but, have we truly repented, and have we the witness of the Spirit to the fact that we are the children of God. The conversions of Lydia and the jailer were entirely different in their manifestations, but the same in the work done in their souls. Some one says, "The Lord opened the heart of Lydia with an oiled key, but it took an earthquake to open the heart of the jailer." It was the same work of opening the heart in both cases. Lydia was one of these gentle characters which opened spontaneously to the gospel as a pure rose-bud opens to the sun. The jailer was an entirely different character.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." This is still a fact, and still is the condition of salvation. There are several beliefs that are mistaken for this. 1. Some people think believing Jesus sufficient. A person might believe everything a doctor said without being cured. We may believe every word Jesus every uttered and not be saved. 2. Believing *in* Jesus is some times mistaken for believing *on* Jesus. We may believe in a doctor and yet not be cured. We must take his medicine or he cannot cure us, no matter how much we may believe in his medical skill. Believing in Jesus as the divine and the Saviour of the world will not bring

salvation. To believe on a doctor is to put our case in his hands, obey his orders and take his medicine. Believing on Jesus is to put our case in his hands, obey his order and hang our hopes of salvation on his atoning sacrifice. If we do this we will surely forsake our sins and trust him for salvation.

It was belief on a person—not belief in a creed in the articles of faith of some church. How difficult it is to make some people see this. He said, “Sirs or Lord, what must I do to be saved?” They replied, “Believe on the *Lord* Jesus Christ.” This is the exact translation. They wished him to understand they were not lords but that Jesus was *the* Lord on which they were to believe. They not only told him that he could believe and be saved, but his family also could believe and be saved. His believing would not save his family, but they must believe for themselves.

From this beginning they went on to indoctrinate him into the truths of the gospel in a discourse. Washed from his sins, he washed their stripes and was baptized that night. Some people do not believe in sudden conversions. But here was one. This was the conversion not of a proselyte like Lydia, but of a raw heathen, and a brutal man at that probably, as jailers were usually of that class. The salvation that saved this extreme case will save any one. A remedy that will cure a bad case of disease will cure lighter cases. If we do as the jailer did, we will be saved. We see here that salvation is a simpler matter to obtain than some churches or preachers imagine.

The jailer brought them into the house and got a good supper for them. The night began in distress, but ended in a feast. So wonderfully can the Lord bring things to pass.

Notice how Luke brings out the divinity of Jesus. Paul told the jailer to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and Luke, the writer calls it, “Believing in God.” Jesus is God.

The magistrate thought they had punished Paul and Silas enough. So as soon as it was day they sent their under officers to tell the jailer to let them go. We think too the earthquake had frightened the magistrates. But Paul stood against the injustice that had been done him, not so much to stand up for his rights for his own sake as for the church he was to leave

there. It would give the church a bad reputation to have its founders treated as criminals. On the other hand it would help the church if it were known that the magistrates had treated them unjustly as Roman citizens. The Roman law was very particular in defending Roman citizens from indignities, such as whipping. The magistrates themselves were liable to be punished with death for whipping a Roman citizen. Paul now had the advantage of the magistrates. So the apostles, since the magistrates themselves came and courteously besought them to leave the city, went to the church and exhorted them and comforted them and departed. Some think that Luke the writer remained awhile as he says "they" comforted the church and then "departed." Paul seems to have been peculiarly attached to this church (See Phil. 1:3-5), doubtless because of their sympathy which he received in this persecution. "Of all the churches which Paul founded, the Philippians seem to have been the most free from fault, and the most attached to himself. In the epistle which he wrote to them, we find no censure and much praise; and so zealous was their love for Paul, that they alone (of all the churches which he had founded), forced him from the very beginning to accept their contributions for his support. We might suppose from this that they were a wealthy church; yet Paul tells us that 'in the heavy trial which had proved their steadfastness, the fullness of their joy had overflowed out of the depths of their poverty, in the richness of their liberality.'" (Conybeare.)



## CHAPTER XVII.

### PERSECUTION ADVANCES THE CAUSE.

The Persecution at Thessalonica. Vs. 1-7. The Persecution at Berea. Vs. 8-15. The Sermon at Athens. Vs. 16-34.

One of the things that God has used to advance his cause is the persecution of its enemies. Just as a general in war takes the guns of his adversary and turns them upon him, so has God done in turning the very persecution of Satan against his kingdom. In this he makes the wrath of man praise him. The persecution that broke out against the Pentecostal church at Jerusalem, was the means of scattering the church who would have otherwise remained at Jerusalem and so they carried the holy fire wherever they went and set new fires everywhere. So was it previously true in the experience of Paul. The persecution at Iconium was so great that he went to Derbe and Lystra and started churches there. The persecution at Philippi drove him to Thessalonica where he started a church. The persecution there drove him to Berea, Athens and Corinth and Ephesus; and everywhere he preached the gospel and had fruit. This chapter is a record of how persecution helped Paul in spreading the truth.

#### THE PERSECUTION AT THESSALONICA. Vs. 1-7.

1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews :

2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

3 Opening and alleginig, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

4 And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

5 But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto

them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;

7 Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, *one* Jesus.

It was very hard for even Paul, a Spirit-filled man, to get over his notion that he was to preach to the Jews only. He began to preach in the synagogue of the Jews in Thessalonica and had some converts, but the unbelieving Jews incited a riot which compelled him to leave the city, and finally resulted in his preaching the gospel to the Gentiles at Thessalonica, Athens and Ephesus.

The charge which his enemies made is worthy of notice. The unbelieving Jews stirred up the mob, who went to the house of Jason where Paul was stopping. When they could not find Paul and Silas they seized the brethren who were in the house and brought them before the ruler of the city and made this charge that they had "turned the world upside down." This was a compliment to the power of the gospel, started by the preaching of a few fishermen. It was the truth because the world is wrong side up and needs the gospel to set it right. Wherever true Christianity goes it moves things. But the last part of the charge was false. It was the same charge made against Jesus, that he was an enemy of the Roman government. They had preached of Jesus as Messiah, and these enemies had distorted the truth. Just as the enemies of Christ distorted his assertion of being a king and made it appear that he sought to reign as a temporal king. Paul certainly proved the truth of his own statement, "All they that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

#### THE PERSECUTION AT BEREA. Vs. 8-15.

8 And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.

9 And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by

night unto Berea: who coming *thither* went into the synagogue of the Jews.

11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

12 Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

13 But, when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.

14 And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.

15 And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.

So the brethren got Paul and Silas away by night for fear of the mob, to Berea, a city about fifty miles southwest from Thessalonica. Coming hither Paul went straight to the Jewish synagogue. These Jews were more noble than those at Thessalonica, because they did not go by their prejudices but searched the Scriptures to see if the Messiahship of Jesus could be proved by the Word of God. Notice more particularly in what their nobility consisted. 1. They received the word with all readiness of mind. It was a new doctrine to them that the Messiah had come in the person of Jesus Christ, but they did not yield to prejudice. 2. They searched the Scriptures. 3. They searched the Scriptures every day. No wonder that many of them believed. All God asks of honest people is to search the Scripture for themselves. He does not ask people to blindly receive the truth. The evidences of Christianity are so sure and convincing that no honest man can fail to believe if he examines them. How few even in this day are able to be willing to receive the truth without being hindered by previous conceptions caused by their early training or the passions of an evil heart.

But their enemies of Thessalonica could not let them alone. Although it was fifty miles away when they heard of the work of Paul, they came and stirred up the people against Paul and Silas. This shows the vindictive, hateful nature of the human heart manifest in religious sectarian hate—the bitterest kind of hate in the world. These missionaries of the devil (he has such)

were the means of driving Paul out of Berea. But Timothy and Silas remained. Those who conducted Paul intended to take him to sea, but instead brought him to Athens. No doubt the hand of the Lord was in this, as it had been in sending him into Europe in the first place. God had planned to have him evangelize in all the great centers of population of heathenism.

### THE SERMON AT ATHENS. Vs. 16-34.

16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?

20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.

21 (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent :

31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this *matter*.

33 So Paul departed from among them.

34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which *was* Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

We now come to one of the most sublime events in the history of the world—the arrival of Paul at Athens, the seat of the highest type of learning and philosophy in the heathen world. Athens was the capital of Greece and the product of the best that the mind of man can accomplish unaided by divine grace, in religion, philosophy, science, art and learning and culture. Athens as a cultured city was the best man could do without revealed religion. Here Paul, the advance guard of the gospel of Jesus Christ, attacked systems of religion and thought which were the culmination of the best minds of the age. Little did those, who bade him welcome and invited him to speak that day, think that the gospel of the despised Nazarene whom he represented that day was to triumph until those beautiful temples were to lay in ruins and their idols were to fall and be broken before the triumphant advent of the cross of Jesus. Paul seemed to have accomplished little that day, but it was the beginning of great blessings for Europe. “To understand aright, either the significance of Paul’s course at Athens, the meaning of the incidental allusions to his surroundings, or the full force of his marvellous address, it is necessary that the reader should have a measurably correct apprehension of both the external aspects of the city and the character of the people. Athens, the pre-eminent ancient city in civilization, arts and arms—distinguished for philosophy and learning—famous for its architecture and statuary, and the mother of the most celebrated warriors, poets, statesmen, and philosophers—was situated in the plain of Attica, the city proper being about three miles from the sea, although as described by Lewis and Smith, it consisted of two circular wall-enclosed cities, united by

another long and narrow portion, also wall-enclosed. One of the circular portions included the sea ports, Pireus and Phalerum, the other the inland settlement: the connecting fortification known as the 'Long Walls,' being a populous street, making a third city, whose inhabitants were shut out from all view of the country by the vast wall on either side. It needs no graphic words to picture the misery of a people thus imprisoned, when to their ordinary suffocating, crowding was added the horror of the plague or the terrors of a siege." (Abbott.)

The world by its wisdom had not found God or true religion. The philosophy of the age was decaying. The human intelligence has never been more subtle and keen; art has never since risen to a loftier height, but in spite of all these human attainments, the morality of the people, both public and private, had become corrupt. Never since the flood had man become so wicked as in those days. The world had become a cess-pool of human corruption into which the gospel like the salt in Elisha's spring was flung to purify and sweeten. It is very important then that we study the scene and see how Paul preached in this home of ancient philosophy, and to some of the philosophers themselves.

Paul's soul was stirred within him as he saw the city filled with idols. The literal meaning is his soul was *sharpened* or *whetted*. He felt an indignation burn within him to see human beings given to the worship of idols. So he alone, single-handed like little David attacked the whole system. The classic writers (such as Petrovius, Pausania, Zenophon, Socrates and others) speak of the great numbers of idols in Athens. He did not get out some circular and hire a hall but went into the market places and began to deliver his message wherever he could find hearers; wherever he could find some one to listen. Some preachers think to be called to preach means to stand behind a pulpit only, but to do nothing in private preaching.

Paul in his personal work encountered mostly Jews and "devout persons"—Jewish proselytes, in the market place, until finally he encountered "certain philosophers" of the Epicurean and Stoic schools of philosophy. These were the principal schools of philosophy. Although there were several minor schools. The Stoics were much like the modern Pantheists, who believe that

God is in everything, and everything is God. The Epicurean were about the same as modern Materialists. "They held that pleasure is the only good and pain the only evil; virtue is no good to be sought for itself, vice is no evil to be for itself avoided; the one is to be sought for the happiness it produces, the other avoided for the suffering it entails." These two great errors are virtually the same in the world today and it is therefore very interesting to know how Paul preached to such people. We do not believe modern preachers can find any better doctrine than Paul preached. Paul preached Jesus and the resurrection to these Gentiles. Many modern missionaries would have started a college or high school to get them ready for the gospel. But Paul preached the gospel.

There were two views that these philosophers took of Paul. One class called him a babbler—literally a seed-picker—one who retails small talk or gossip. Others said he was a setter forth of strange gods—a serious charge because it was forbidden by law to introduce new religions. Socrates met death four hundred years before for that very thing.

So they took him up to Areopagus or Hill of Mars. This hill was the seat of a council called by the same name, which was a kind of civil court, and ruled the city, both in civil and religious matters. Their action denotes curiosity rather than any accusation. They were a people always given to speculation, and new theories always delighted them. One of our commentators thinks Luke is sarcastic here, and says Verse 21 may be rendered, "have time for nothing else but either to hear or to tell the latest news." The descendants of the Athenians are still among us.

So Paul stood up in the midst of Mars Hill and began his discourse by telling them that he perceived they were more *religious* or *reverential* than others (the word superstitious is an incorrect translation. The American Revised Version renders it "very religious"). There are millions of people in the world who are too religious because they have a false religion that hinders their seeking the true religion. However, his opening sentence was calculated evidently as a compliment and at once put them in touch with him to a certain extent.

He explains what he meant. He had seen in passing about through their city an altar dedicated "*to an unknown God.*" (Revised Version.) "The origin of these altars (there were several of them, so historians say) is accounted for in different ways. There is a legend that in the time of a plague, it being uncertain which god was offended, a number of sheep were let loose, and wherever one lay down an altar was erected to the unknown, offended god. Some suppose that these altars were originally dedicated to some particular god, but the name having been lost, the place was thus sacredly kept. Others still imagine—for there seems to be no basis for the opinion—that Jehovah was really intended, and that it was an attempt on the part of the Athenians to conciliate the Jews. The real, underlying reason appears to be a sense in the more cultivated Greeks, that all attempts to 'find God' through statues, and altars, and temples, were, after all, in vain and that he was still unknown; of this the writings of the best classic authors afford abundant illustration." (Abbott.) Paul takes this inscription as his starting point to preach the gospel. Happy is the preacher or personal worker who knows how to seize upon some present incident or everyday fact or occurrence as a starting point to preach the word of life. See how Paul builds his message on this foundation. He tells them that not knowingly they have been worshipping the unknown God. The accurate meaning is not "ignorantly" but "not knowing."

He now in a single sentence asserts the work of creation to Jehovah. The Epicureans had been teaching that there is no God and all things came by chance. The Stoics had been teaching that all things were God and God was all things. The mythology of Greece and Rome taught that there were many gods who ruled parts of the universe. Paul sets forth the fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion in contrast to all these systems. It was a startling doctrine to preach right in the midst of heathenism. Paul does not begin as with the Jews on the foundation of the Old Testament Scripture, but on the foundation of God as the Creator. "Only on the Old Testament foundation of creation can we rightly build the New Testament doctrine of Redemption; and only he who scripturally believes and apprehends by faith the earliest words of Revelation concerning the Creator of all things,



can also apprehend, know, and Scripturally worship the *man*, in whom God's word down to the latest canonical revelation, gathers all things." (Stier.) Paul says the same thing that Stephen told the Sanhedrim (Acts 7:48) that God does not dwell in temples made with hands. Doubtless Paul remembered the dying Stephen's sermon, for he heard it.

The next step in his address is the statement that God is not served by human hands. The translation "worshipped" should be *served*. The heathen thought their gods had to be nourished by food, as they today bring costly food and drink to their temples for their gods. But Jehovah needs nothing, for everything comes from him, even our lives. So that he does not need our service.

He now advances a step further and states the universal brotherhood of men. God "hath made of one blood all men for to dwell on the face of the earth." This was a truth exceedingly distasteful to the Athenians for they prided themselves on being of better origin than people in general. This also hits at polytheism that teaches that every nation has a god of its own.

The next step is to show them that all their blessing came from God. "Hath determined the times before appointed." Had to determine the changes of the seasons, and their limits; "The apostle by adding this, admonishes the Athenians that they, like every other people, had not only received their peculiar advantages from the common Creator, but that they could hold them only during the continuance of his good will and favor. In assigning to nations their respective abodes, he had fixed both the seasons and their prosperity and the limits of their territory. i. e., it was he, who decided *when*, and *how long*, they should flourish, and *how far* their dominion should extend. We have the same idea in Job 12:23." (Hackett.) Let all nations keep humble. God decides when they shall flourish. Let us of this land as a nation not be too self-conceited. We only prosper as God permits.

God does all this in his providence to bring them to a knowledge of him. "If haply they might feel after him." The whole heathen world are like a blind man groping around to find something he knows not what. They feel an undefined need. It is the soul quest after God. They try in vain to satisfy their starv-

ing souls by bowing down to idols of their own creation. God is very near them, but sin separates them from him.

Paul now quotes from a heathen writer to substantiate his assertions. (This shows that Paul was well read in the literature of the day.) He quotes a poet by the name of Aratus thus, "We are his offspring." If Paul had been talking to Jews, he would have quoted from the Old Testament, which they considered authority; but as he was talking to Gentiles he quotes one of their own poets; whom they considered authority.

See how he leads them on the doctrine of the incarnation of Christ without mentioning it. He says, "We ought not to think the Godhead is like unto gold, silver or stone engraven by man's device." Why? Because we are his offspring. If we, his offspring, are not gold, silver or stone, certainly he, our Father, can not be such, nor do idols represent him. For he is like us. And if there be a representative of God on earth he would be like us. So Jesus came not as an idol but as a man.

Then he encourages them by telling them that God overlooks the ignorance that caused this in the past, but now through the gospel of Jesus, which was to spread through all the world, he commands all men to repent. The reason why all men should hasten to obey the command to repent is because the day of judgment has been appointed, which all, both Jews and Gentiles, must meet. Notice God commands all men to repent. It is a duty then which all can perform. Some people say there is a continuous judgment going on every day. But Paul says there is to be a specific, definite day set apart for judgment. This does not at all harmonize with the doctrine of a second probation, or a getting gradually better in eternity.

He also states that the judgment will be pronounced "by that man whom he hath ordained." Abbott says, "Observe that Paul refers here to Jesus as *that man*, saying nothing of his divine nature, his incarnation, his kingdom, because he would then be liable to misapprehension, and might be thought to be adding to the deities of Athens another deified Jewish hero. But in Thessalonica he speaks of Christ's kingdom and second coming (verse 7) and in Corinth his incarnation (1 Cor. 1:22-24). He adapts his preaching to the needs of his auditors. The word *that* is not in

the original: the definite article is wanting; but it is implied by the construction.”

So Paul preached and a few believed. The rest turned scornfully away. The pride of education and culture asserted itself when they heard of the resurrection. It was a doctrine which they considered absurd and so they would hear no more. There were, however, two notable converts—Dionysius, the Areopagite. He belonged to the court of the Areopagites. He was one of the leaders therefore of the city. Eusebius says he became a bishop in the Christian church. There was also a notable woman by the name of Damaris, and a few others. Paul could leave no church behind him as in other cities. There is nothing so hard to break through as the shell of intellectual pride in which ungodly scholars encase themselves. As Paul says in another place “Knowledge puffeth up.” Jesus said in the parable of the sower that there were several classes that hear the gospel. There were several here. “Paul rightly divided the Word of Truth that day, and the Word divided the hearers into distinct and well-defined groups: into mockers, hesitators, and cleaving believers. The *mockers*, whether socially higher or lower, were in spirit the hardest of the company. They were fast and free livers. They enjoyed life, and kept the thought of death away. They went away laughing at the truth of God and the God of truth. The *hesitators*, convinced in their consciences that the testimony of the apostle had all the air of truth, did not dare to scoff—but, wedded to their own ease and pleasure, they were not willing to take up the cross and follow Christ. Accordingly they made a respectful apology to the preacher and went away. The *third* class cleaved to him and believed: that is, while this man’s lips were the channel through which the Word of Life reached them, the intimate longing of their hearts—their ultimate grasp—reached and rested on Christ crucified, whom Paul preached. They cleaved to Paul, but they believed in Christ.” (Arnot.)



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### EPISODES IN THE WORK.

The Conclusion of Paul's Second Missionary Tour. Vs. 1-22.  
Paul's Third Missionary Tour Begun. Vs. 23. A Lay  
Preacher. Vs. 24-28.

#### THE CONCLUSION OF PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY TOUR. Vs. 1-22.

1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome :) and came unto them.

3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews *that* Jesus *was* Christ.

6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook *his* raiment, and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I *am* clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain *man's* house, named Justus, *one* that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.

8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:

10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

11 And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

12 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat,

13 Saying, This *fellow* persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

14 And when Paul was now about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O *ye* Jews, reason would that I should bear with you :

15 But if it be a question of words and names, and *of* your law, look ye *to it*; for I will be no judge of such *matters*.

16 And he drave them from the judgment seat.

17 Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat *him* before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.

18 And Paul *after this* tarried *there* yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila ; having shorn *his* head in Cenchrea : for he had a vow.

19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there : but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

20 When they desired *him* to tarry longer time with them, he consented not ;

21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem : but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

22 And when he had landed at Cæsarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.

Rejected by nearly all his hearers, leaving only a few believers, Paul turned from the cultured city of Athens to the luxurious and exceedingly licentious Corinth, a city where he remained a long time and saw much fruit from his labors. Here he first begun to write his wonderful epistles that have influenced the world more than any other religious writings ever penned. He had time here to write his two epistles to the Thessalonians and the epistle to the Romans. Corinth was a great commercial center on account of its location. And wherever in that age and every age since there is a good field for traffic the Jew will be found there. A large colony of Jews lived here. And Paul whose heart's desire and constant prayer for Israel was that they might be saved (Rom. 10:1) was especially drawn to these Jews that he might preach Christ to them.

The emperor Claudius had driven all Jews from Rome. Jews have been persecuted in all ages of the world. This was especially true in Paul's time. But there were some blessings that the persecution wrought. One of them was the fellowship and sym-

pathy of Aquila and Priscilla, with Paul. The great apostle of the Gentiles needed human companionship at this time, as Timothy and Silas were not with him. So these banished Jews became his companions as he was of the same trade. They worked together.

Every Jewish parent taught his boy a trade. Paul learned to make tents. That is he wove the coarse cloth used for that purpose. The great apostle at work with his hands teaches men some very practical lessons. It shows the self-denial that a holy man is willing to put forth, to help on the cause of God. Paul need not have worked if he had not embraced Christianity. More than that he need not have worked as it was, for he lays down the principle in his letter to the Corinthians thus: "Have we not power to eat and drink? us only and Barnabas, have we not power to forbear working?" (1 Cor. 9:4, 6.) He says to Timothy, "The laborer is worthy of his hire." Paul was willing to sacrifice his own rights in order not to hinder the gospel. The sharp-eyed Greeks all about him would lay it up against him as seeking to get rich or being just after money and worldly gain, if he took any money for his services. So he denied himself for example's sake. It must have been real self-denial for a man whose heart was engaged in preaching the gospel to be confined to the work-shop.

We see also the dignity of labor. Some think it is degrading. But Jesus, the carpenter, and Paul, the tent maker, worked with their hands and forever dignified manual labor.

We notice again that God will not work a miracle where the same end can be otherwise accomplished. God might have fed Paul by a miracle. But he works no miracles unless all other resources have failed.

We see the advantages of young men being taught a trade, in Paul's experience. He had something to fall back on and in this instance it secured to him valuable helpers in the person of Aquila and Priscilla. "The trade which St. Paul's father had taught him in his youth was thus the means of procuring him invaluable associates in the noblest work in which man was ever engaged. No higher example can be found of the possibility of combining diligent labor in the common things in life with the utmost spirituality of mind."

So Paul worked six days in the week in tent making. (Tent making is a great industry in the East even to this day.) On the Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, with the Jews and Greek proselytes and persuaded many that Jesus was the Christ.

Silas and Timothy now came to help him. They had been left behind in Macedonia. "Paul was pressed in spirit." This is a faulty translation. It should be "Paul was wholly given to the word." Silas and Timothy found him very busy in persuading these Jews and Greeks. Paul needed Silas and Timothy. He says later of himself at this time, "I was with you in fear and much trembling." No doubt his rebuff by the philosophers of Athens and the awful corruption of Corinth made him feel his weakness to deal with the sin that he saw all about him. The best of us need human sympathy and fellowship.

Paul had always felt it his duty to go to the Jews first with the gospel. Now his conscience no longer held him to it, since they had rejected his well-meant efforts. Henceforth he turned to the Gentiles, shaking his raiment which meant the same as the symbolical act of shaking the dust from the feet. (See note on Chapter 13:51.) By this symbolical act he said, "I am free from your blood if you perish in your sins." According to this a preacher is responsible if he is not faithful to his flock in declaring the whole counsel of God. As they would hear him no more he left the synagogue and went out to the house of Justus, who lived close by the synagogue, and held services there. Probably he was interrupted by their loud cries when he attempted to preach in the synagogue.

He had many converts and founded a strong church here, and Justus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and his family were saved and the whole household baptized. This must have greatly strengthened the cause. "From this as well as several other passages, we find that when the parents or heads of households became Christian believers, so did their children. All were baptized together. So, in one place, we read of 'the church which is in the house of Nymphas;' showing that such a group of believers, comprising parents and their children, might constitute a church of itself. How much beauty and sanctity there would be in such a spectacle—a church in each house—and how mightily the world



would gain in Christian order, purity and power, if it were generally recognized." (Bishop Huntingdon.)

Here we have an instance of the Lord fortifying his servant for future emergency. Paul was with them "in weakness and in fear and in much trembling" as he afterwards confessed (1 Cor. 2:3) and he was soon to be brought by the mob before Gallio, the deputy or proconsul of Achaia. But God spoke to him in a night vision to comfort and fortify him, saying, "Be not afraid but speak and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city." The literal translation of the last clause is, "There is for me much people in this city." It seems to mean that there were many honest-hearted people in the city who would embrace the gospel as soon as they heard it, and they were soon to hear it. The whole time that he was in Corinth was eighteen months.

At the end of the eighteen months of his residence there, the Jews started an insurrection against him, and brought him before Gallio, who was astute and saw through their sophistry and drove them from the court room, declaring their charges unjust, for they had accused him of breaking the Roman law. He said all their litigation was just about "words and names." To him a Roman, the question whether Jesus was the Christ was only a question of names. The Greeks took occasion from this to beat Sosthenes, the chief representative of the Jews. The latter were very unpopular and it did not take much to stir up riot and persecution against them. So the Jews were punished in their persecution instead of Paul, for Gallio did not care to interfere to stop the beating of Sosthenes. So Paul was freed and his persecutors punished.

Paul remained quite a long time in Corinth after this, and then, taking Priscilla and Aquila with him, sailed for Syria. He had his head shorn before he left the seaport, Cenchrea, because he had taken a vow, "The vow here is very generally thought to be that of the Nazarite: the restrictions of this vow were three-fold. There must be entire abstinence from all strong drink, from the juice of the grape, and from everything belonging to the vine. The hair of the Nazarite was to be permitted to grow, no razor touching his head during all the days of his separation,

and he should on no account defile himself for the dead. When the term of the vow expired, the Nazarite brought a sin-offering, a burnt-offering, with the usual appendages, his hair being shorn or shaven, and cast into the fire which was under the sacrifice of the peace offerings, indicating the ordinary state of friendly communion with God. If the vow here mentioned was that of the Nazarite, Paul must have *shorn*, not *shaved* his head at Cenchrea, preparatory to the vow, purposing not to cut his hair again till he had fulfilled the vow by the offering at Jerusalem, or else the obligations of the Nazarite had been changed since Old Testament times. The customary term of the Nazarite vow, when not for life was, according to the Rabbis, forty days." (Abbott.)

They come to Ephesus. It was usually a voyage of two or three days. Here he went into the synagogue and preached. They tried to have him stay longer but he said he must go to Jerusalem to keep the feast—probably the feast of Pentecost. It must have been a very important vow to cause him to tear himself away from an opportunity to preach the gospel to his countrymen. Paul set an example in going to Jerusalem to the feast, that all Christian workers should imitate. He looked after his own spiritual needs. Some are so busy in the Lord's work that they become lean in their own souls. It is a good thing for workers to go away to some religious gathering for their own soul's good. They will do better service on their return. It is a pity to see people spiritually starving to death when they are feeding others.

#### PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY TOUR BEGUN. Vs. 23.

23 And after he had spent some time *there*, he departed, and went over *all* the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

He began this tour by revisiting the churches which he had previously founded in Galatia and Phrygia. It will be noticed as we have had occasion to note before that on this second visit to these churches, he spent his time not in making disciples but in "strengthening all disciples." We have shown us in Acts 8 that the custom with the apostles after souls were converted was

to urge them to seek the Baptism with the Holy Ghost. We believe Paul pursued this course everywhere, just as we know he did in Acts 19 when he asked the twelve disciples of John if they "had received the Holy Ghost since they believed." This is the true sense of the rite of Confirmation practiced in the churches of today, although the true sense is hidden from their eyes.

#### A LAY PREACHER. Vs. 24-28.

24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:

28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that* publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

The writer here introduces an episode in the work to give a specimen of the workers and a sample of the work of spreading the gospel, which was now making great headway among the nations.

There was a certain Jew named Apollos, who was born at Alexandria. This city was in Egypt. It was a seat of learning and so interested had the scholars become in the religion of the Jews, that they had translated the Old Testament into the Greek language in the version called The Septuagint. We can see that it would be easy under such circumstances for Apollos to be very familiar with the Old Testament. Let us note some of the points that show that he was a "converted" man; i. e., regenerate.

1. He was eloquent. We do not claim that this is any proof of regeneration. Yet the truth has much to do with eloquence. The heathen used to say that an orator must be a good man, to be truly eloquent. And salvation is the theme of all others that affords opportunity for eloquence.
2. He was "mighty in the Scriptures." We live in an age when men are mighty *about* the

Scriptures; when the number of books and especially books about the Bible is great—too great. “Many of the books are professionally religious, and so commend themselves to our consciences, and so piquant and palatable as to recommend themselves to our taste. Thus, all unwittingly, while we believe in the Bible, praise it, and read it by snatches, we fail to feed upon it with the keenness of relish and thoroughness of digestion essential to our highest profit. Hence arises a generation eloquent *about* the Scriptures but not *mighty in them*.” 3. He was “fervent in the Holy Ghost.” Bengel says “he had *the Spirit* not in that special way that is treated of in Chapter 19:6, but in the ordinary way.” 4. He was instructed in the way of the Lord.” Alford, one of the best New Testament scholars of the 19th century, says this should be translated “He was instructed in the things of Jesus.” As yet he only knew by experience the baptism of John, but he had a knowledge of the things of Jesus. John’s baptism did much for those who availed themselves of it, for it stood for faith in Jesus (Acts 19:4); also for regeneration. (John 3:36; John the Baptist is there preaching); the knowledge of salvation (Luke 1:77). All these experiences John preached and those baptized by him signified by the rite of baptism that they had this experience. Dr. Daniel Steele says of Apollos, “He was acquainted with all the facts of Christ’s earthly life, Christian baptism included, but had failed to see that while John’s baptism symbolized the negative side of sanctification, the putting away of sin, or death to sin, Christian baptism prefigures the positive part, the fullness of the Divine Life through the baptism of the Holy Ghost. . . . The great defect of Apollos, therefore, was in not having a correct view of the extent of Gospel salvation through the baptism and indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the office of the Comforter and Sanctifier, and in the absence of the experience of this Spirit-baptism. He was in just the state in which many eloquent preachers are found in modern times. In a sense they are spiritual men, and some of them are “fervent in the Spirit,” in his ordinary operations, but they have no experience of that instantaneous and mighty anointing of soul, that distinct and specific Pentecost—the crowning work of Jesus as foreseen by John, ‘He shall baptize you with the

Holy Ghost and fire.' Fletcher says that the ordinary work of the Spirit is like the dew; the extraordinary is the outpouring of a mighty shower. Apollos had been moistened by the dew, but not drenched by the shower. Two of his hearers who were enjoying the shower in their own hearts quickly detected the dryness of the preaching of their Alexandrian pastor, suspected the cause, and attempted the cure.'

God used a pious layman and his wife to lead this eloquent preacher into the perfect light. Some of the commentators are puzzled to tell what he was led into. Those who know about the second work of grace called entire sanctification have no difficulty in the matter.

No wonder that this "eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures," "instructed in the things of Jesus," "fervent in Spirit," with his new touch of the Baptism with the Holy Ghost, "mightily convinced the Jews."

See how much a consecrated layman and wife accomplished in instructing a man whom God used. They were preaching through him. See what they did not do. They did not pray *at* him and scold him in public and say "our preacher lacks the blessing." See how humble he was. He did not say "These unlearned people cannot teach me anything."

Little people can often prove themselves a blessing to big folks, as a small steam tug can help a great ocean liner out to sea. Here we see the twofold office of preaching illustrated. Apollos "helped them much which had believed through grace," (Vs. 27) and "mightily convinced the Jews." He built up the saints and reached the unbelievers. This is always the tendency of the work of holiness preachers.



## CHAPTER XIX.

### SOME PHASES OF A GENUINE WORK OF HOLINESS

A Spirit Baptized Minister Makes the Second Work of Grace of the First Importance. Vs. 1-7. Controversy is Necessary on the Part of a Holy Ministry. Vs. 8-10. God Gives a Holy Ministry Special Gifts When Necessary. Vs. 11-12. The Devil Always Seeks to Imitate the Work of God. Vs. 13-17. A Holy Ministry Requires a Genuine Repentance. Vs. 18-22. Holiness in Preaching Always Antagonizes Sin. Vs. 23-41.

A SPIRIT BAPTIZED MINISTRY MAKES THE SECOND WORK OF GRACE OF THE FIRST IMPORTANCE. Vs. 1-7.

1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

5 When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6 And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

7 And all the men were about twelve.

We find in this chapter some phases of the work where the preacher makes the second work of grace of the first importance. Paul passing through the eastern part of Asia Minor came to Ephesus and found there twelve disciples (not sinners), of whom he asked the question "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Let us remember that these were

*disciples*. Some have translated the passage "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" This translation makes no appreciable difference, for they had believed, but had not yet received the gift of the Holy Ghost. We see here that Paul considered this the first subject that should be presented to disciples; just as the church at Jerusalem when Philip had his revival at Samaria, considered it the thing of first importance that Peter and John should go down to Samaria and urge upon the converts the matter of receiving the Holy Ghost. This is the first thing that should be pressed upon converts today. Jesus too, very early in his ministry encouraged his disciples to pray for the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Luke 11:13.)

Their reply to this question was "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." They had not heard that the Holy Ghost was given to believers seems to be the idea. It can not be that they had not heard of the Holy Ghost for John the Baptist, whose disciples they were, had preached, saying of Jesus, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire." Abbott says, "Their reply means 'Nothing was said about receiving the Holy Ghost at the time of our conversion and acceptance of Christianity.'" They believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah; but the further truth that another Comforter had come, who was given for light and life to all that would receive him (Chapt. 2:38-39) they had heard nothing of. The church still contains many Ephesian Christians, who believe in God, the Father, and Christ as the Redeemer, but not practically in a Holy Spirit, on whom they may daily and hourly rely, and in whose inspiration and guidance there is perfect liberty. They have accepted the doctrine of repentance, baptism, and the remission of sins; but they have not gone on to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Unless a person is prejudiced he will not attempt to doubt that these were saved men. "Paul found twelve *Christians*. That they were genuine Christians is shown first by the fact that they were styled *disciples*. This term standing alone is always used in the Acts and Epistles as a synonym for Christians. Look in your concordances again and see how numerous the passages like these are. 'He that believeth shall be saved.' 'Unto us who believe he is precious.' You will then be prepared



to justify the assertion of Alford, that 'to believe,' when no objection is added 'can bear no meaning but that of believing on the Lord Jesus.' But how could they be Christians in utter ignorance of the Holy Ghost? If they were instructed in John's baptism only, they must have heard of the Holy Ghost, for John pointed his disciples to him 'who should baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire.' If they were believers in Moses they must have heard of the Spirit of God. If they had read the Hebrew Psalms they would have found this expression, 'Take not thy Holy Spirit from me.' Therefore, we conclude with Bengel, that a strict construction must be put on these words, 'We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost,' but rather this, '*Not even have we heard this, that there are others who receive him.*' Therefore, what they were ignorant of was the effusion of the Holy Spirit peculiar to the New Testament. There we find the old adage true, 'Like priest, like people.' They were exactly in the same state of experience with their former pastor, Apollos. (Chapter 18:25-28.) They were in the ante-pentecostal state years after the Pentecost, as many Christians are today, centuries after the effusion of the Spirit. It is for the purpose of demonstrating the possibility of a fact so anomalous that we have conducted our readers through this exegesis. We believe that all candid readers will vindicate us from the charge of handling the Word of God deceitfully!

If our inference from this passage is correct, then it follows that when penitents are justified through faith in Christ, they do not in the Pauline sense 'receive the Holy Ghost,' in the peculiar office of the Paraclete, though they may receive the witness of the Spirit. It follows moreover that it is the duty of all, who have been filled with the Spirit, whether preacher or laity, to testify of this great salvation, and to use many efforts to lead others, especially preachers of the Word into the enjoyment of this grace. (Dr. Steele.)

They said they were baptized *into* John's baptism. His baptism represented certain doctrines and experiences and whoever was baptized professed by the act to have embraced this doctrine and to have been partakers in these experiences for which it stood. It seems necessary to show right here what John preached

and in so doing we shall show that these twelve disciples were justified, and regenerate men. 1. John preached repentance, (Mark 1:4); 2. John preached remittance or forgiveness of sins (Mark 1:4). 3. John preached that we must believe on Jesus (John 3:36) also Verse 4 of this chapter. Notice the speaker is John the Baptist and not John the writer of the Gospel according to St. John. (See also Verse 4.) John preached the possibility of knowing that we are saved (Luke 1:77). So when these twelve men were baptized as well as all John's converts they professed by that act to have repented; to have had their sins forgiven; to have believed on Jesus; to have been regenerated, and to know their sins were forgiven. As they were manifestly converted, they now received Christian baptism for the baptism of John, as a ceremony was not in the name of the Holy Trinity.

Paul then laid his hands upon them, *after* they were baptized and the Holy Ghost came upon these *baptized believers*. Some who have tried to make out that these men were unconverted and received the Holy Ghost at the same time fail to see that they were here baptized with water *first* and then received the Holy Ghost *afterwards*. Certainly they were not sinners when they were baptized with water. The Bible nowhere authorizes the baptism of unconverted men. Abbott says, "There is nothing in this language inconsistent with the idea that they had been previously converted." *Believers* baptized with water were here recipients of the Holy Spirit.

#### CONTROVERSY ON THE PART OF A HOLY MINISTRY IS NECESSARY. Vs. 8-10.

8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

Controversy is necessary because error is in the world. To allow error to go unchallenged is cowardly and fatal to souls who

will be snared by it, if we do not speak out. Some people think holiness is a jelly-fish affair, that allows no controversy. But all the blessings of the Gospel that have come to us were bought by some one's strength and blood. All the great doctrines have been preserved by controversy. So Paul kept agitating the truth. He disputed daily in the school of Tyrannus.

Men can not hear the gospel and be the same afterwards. Either they will embrace it and become better or they will refuse and become hardened. It was so with some of Paul's hearers. So Paul kept up this kind of preaching for two years, trying to show that Jesus was the Messiah who had set up the kingdom of God upon earth.

#### GOD GIVES A HOLY MINISTRY SPECIAL GIFTS WHEN NECESSARY. Vs. 11-12.,

11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul :

12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs on aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

It is notable that miracles are not the ordinary divine method of working. God never works uncommon methods except in special crises. When Moses began his work of leading Israel out of bondage miracles were necessary to put the seal of divine approval upon his work. When Jesus began the gospel dispensation miracles were necessary. So here was Paul in a city much given to belief in witchcraft and magic. It seemed therefore necessary to counteract and neutralize these occult influences by special displays of divine power. These miracles at the hands of Paul were out of the usual order of his ministry. He did not perform them in other places. God will help out his servants in some manner in an emergency.

#### THE DEVIL ALWAYS SEEKS TO IMITATE THE WORK OF GOD. Vs. 13-17.

13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

14 And there were seven sons of *one* Sceva, a Jew, *and* chief of the priests, which did so.

15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

As sure as God works in any dispensation, the devil seeks to imitate it. Jannes and Jambres, the Egyptian magicians, sought to do as Moses did when he performed his miracles. When Jesus came in human form, the devil began to possess people also. When divine healing began to be manifest in modern times, the devil raised up "Christian Science." And so when these gracious, miracles were wrought through the agency of Paul, Satan inspired certain vagabond Jews to do the same thing.

There were seven sons of one Scaeva, a Jewish priest who undertook to cast out devils in the name of Jesus as Paul did. They by doing thus were trying to make out that Paul was one of their number. So when they commanded the evil spirit to go out of a man, it replied, "I know who Jesus is, and as for Paul, I am well acquainted, but who are you?" And he wounded them and stripped them of their clothes. The result of all this was great fear came on the Ephesians and the name (not of Paul) but of the Lord Jesus was magnified. Paul always made everything that he said and did, glorify the name of Jesus.

#### A HOLY MINISTRY REQUIRES GENUINE REPENT- ANCE. Vs. 18-22.

18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.

19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all *men*: and they counted the price of them, and found *it* fifty thousand *pieces* of silver.

20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

21 After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.

22 So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

Real preachers of holiness both ancient and modern since the days of John the Baptist are very clear and definite in their preaching on the doctrine of repentance. They require "fruits meet for repentance." In modern times as a rule only preachers of holiness say much about repentance and its fruits.

The gospel always upsets dishonest business, when men embrace it. When the liquor seller knocks in the heads of the barrels of his whisky and turns it into the gutter we know his repentance is genuine. So here were two classes of people who brought forth fruits meet for repentance. Those who had participated in magical arts as practiced by the sons of Scaeva and those who got their living by this method of fraud. The former confessed and gave up the practice. The latter burned their books which were worth in our money from \$8,000 to \$10,000. There is no warrant in this for Roman Catholics to burn up religious books of Protestants because in this case the books were not wrested from the owner but voluntarily given up.

#### HOLINESS IN PREACHING ALWAYS ANTAGONIZES SIN. Vs. 23-41.

23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.

24 For a certain *man* named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;

25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.

26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:

27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

28 And when they heard *these sayings*, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians.

29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring *him* that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.

32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people.

34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians.

35 And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Jupiter?

36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.

37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.

38 Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another.

39 But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.

40 For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.

41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

The divine historian says "there arose no small stir about that way." A genuine work of grace will stir the rage of the devil. The more good there is accomplished the greater will be his hate. When people talk about a religion that is loved by the world, they are not talking about the religion of Jesus. He said himself he came to send not peace but a sword. He said also that the kingdom of heaven was like heaven hid in meal. It only takes a very little leaven to make a great ferment. While it lifts the mass, it also makes a stir. Talk about a holiness that will be loved by the world and whose preaching will be approved of them, and you are talking about lightning without thunder and fire without heat. Preach holiness without opposition and you have come to a time when everybody in town is in the village ceme-

tery. The more we hurt the devil's kingdom, the more he will howl. There can be no wicked business in its neighborhood that will not be opposed to it. So as the gospel spread in Ephesus men began to give up their idols to such an extent that the business of making amulets, charms, and shrines or small models of the temple of the goddess of Diana, began to be injured. The same cry arose that comes from the saloon element when the cause of prohibition advances. Thank God for a gospel that gives trouble to iniquitous business.

Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines (small silver models of the temple of Diana) got alarmed. It seems the idolaters were accustomed to worship the models of the temple and even carry them with them on their journeys and set them up in their dwellings for worship. So he called a meeting of his fellow silversmiths and made this charge: "Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people." What a glorious commendation it was of the work of Paul. (See a similar charge in Acts 21:28.) Our holy religion may be persecuted but men have to acknowledge and fear its power. He then went on still further to compliment the gospel by saying that not only would their business be ruined but the temple of the great goddess, Diana, would be deserted and its magnificence ruined. It has been deserted and ruined. Where is it today? "Nothing more hinders men from going to or from an opinion than the interest they have by holding it. Men do not care so much for the opinion they hold as for what they hold by their opinions. Many a man thinks what Demetrius said, 'this craft by which we have all our wealth is like to be set at naught.' Hence they begin to fly in the face of truth, and oppose it with outrageous rage, so dearly sweet, and sweetly dear, is their darling gain. When once the copy-hold of gain and honor is touched, men begin to look about them, and will never call godliness gain, because gain is their godliness." (Vaughan.) Demetrius had inflamed their religious hatred and stirred their patriotism to a white heat, and with the unreasoning fury of all mobs they seized two of Paul's travelling companions and dragged them into the theatre, which was the largest of the times, and would hold fifty thousand people. It was a semi-circular enclosure without a roof. Paul would have gone in to restore his comrades

or to die with them, but some of the city officers who were friendly to Paul, restrained him. Most of the mob did not know why they were there, as one cried one thing and another another.

The Jews were not friendly to Paul, were frightened lest the mob might think they were the cause of the tumult, as there was great prejudice against the Jews. So they put Alexander up to explain that they had nothing to do with the matter. But when the multitude knew he was a Jew they cried for two hours "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." This crying out was an act of worship. Some think this Alexander was the coppersmith who gave Paul so much trouble. (2 Tim. 4:14.)

Finally the secretary of the city recorder's office appearing, silence was restored and with a very tactful speech he brought them to soberness and then dismissed them. Notice the tact he displayed. He first stated that it was undeniable that the city worshipped the great goddess Diana, whose image fell down from heaven. Paul's preaching had created doubts on this point, but he now re-establishes their faith. Then he tells them that these men had done nothing. They had neither robbed churches nor spoken against Diana. Here we get a hint of the correct way to preach. Instead of criticising their religion, Paul had shown the excellence of the religion of Jesus. We get ahead better not in attacking men's religion, but in showing the loveliness of our own. The best way to fortify men in the belief in a false religion is to attack it, and they will rally to its defence, and grow stronger in their faith in it. He said that if Demetrius or his craftsmen had any complaint against Paul they could take the case into the courts. And if it was any question as regards the safety of the city it could be taken up in a regular town meeting. He concluded by reminding them that the Romans, who were their masters, might call upon them to explain the cause of the day's tumult as the Romans did not countenance such tumultuous assemblages. The crowd took the hint and dispersed.



## CHAPTER XX.

### A HOLY MINISTRY ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL.

Its Activities. Vs. 1-17. Its Characteristics. Vs. 18-35. Its Religious Self-Denial. Vs. 36-38.

#### ITS ACTIVITIES. Vs. 1-17.

1 And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto *him* the disciples, and embraced *them*, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

2 And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

3 And *there* abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.

4 And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

5 These going before tarried for us at Troas.

6 And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

7 And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

8 And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.

9 And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing *him* said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

13 And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.

14 And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.

15 And we sailed thence, and came the next *day* over against Chios; and the next *day* we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogylium; and the next *day* we came to Miletus.

16 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

There is little rest or opportunity for mental or spiritual stagnation in the experience of a holy preacher. He feels the divine "go," that Jesus uttered in his farewell talk to his disciples, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." The word of God is like "a fire shut up in his bones." His heart goes out to all mankind. His only ambition is to spread the truth. Like light and salt he seeks to shed his energies over the whole world. So it was with Paul. Far from being discouraged by the mob of Ephesus, as soon as the uproar had ceased he bid farewell to the brethren of Ephesus and prepared to carry the gospel to other lands. So he started for Macedonia, and Greece, laying the foundations of the gospel in every town to which he came. What an untiring worker he was! This holy man was such an instrument of destruction to the devil's kingdom that Satan resented it, and stirred up the Jews to kill him. There were many plots of this kind during his ministry. (See Acts 9:23, 29; 23:12; 2 Cor. 11:32.)

Leaving Europe he sailed back to Asia, landing at Troas. Resting here seven days he holds a church service on the first day of the week. After Jesus rose on the first day of the week, the Christian church made the first day of the week their Sabbath and the custom has continued until the present. God has blessed this use of the first day of the week, and what God blesses, we ought to observe and perpetuate. This day came to be known to the Christian church as "The Lord's Day." From the fact that the early church made it their Sabbath and because God has blessed its use, we also get our authority for its use. On this day Paul and the brethren partook of the Lord's Supper. After this he preached late into the night. He had much to say; the people

needed instruction and he spoke none too long for these reasons. Such protracted preaching is not needed in these days of light and general information on religion.

Then an after-meeting was held in the guest chamber of the house or "upper room." It was evidently crowded, for some had to sit on the window seat. There was a young man by the name of Eutychus, sitting thus on the window ledge, who fell asleep and fell out of the third-story window and was taken up dead. Some commentators have asserted that he was only stunned. The record says he was taken up dead. "The youth falls and is taken up dead; so much is plainly asserted. Paul, not a physician, but an apostle, gifted, not with medical discernment, but with miraculous power, goes down to him, falls upon him, and embraces him, a strange proceeding for one bent upon discovering if he had suspended animation, but not so for one who bore in mind the action of Elijah (1 Kings 17:21) and Elisha (2 Kings 4:34), each time over a dead body, *and having done this, not before*, he bids them not to be troubled, *for his life was in him*. I would ask any unbiased reader, taking these details into consideration, which of the two is a natural interpretation—and whether there can be any reasonable doubt that *the intent of Luke* is to relate a miracle of raising the dead, and that he mentions falling on and embracing him as the outward significant means taken by the apostle to that end." (Alford.)

Paul then went on all night with talking with his friends. Having talked with his friends all night he started in the morning on a foot journey of twenty miles. This shows the burning zeal and untiring activity of a holy preacher indeed. These were some of the experiences of which he speaks in 2 Cor. 11:23-28, "In labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watching often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often,

in cold and nakedness. Besides all these things that are without that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.''

So they (Paul and Luke and others) (see verse 4) sailed from Assos and came to Miletus. Finding the ship would delay long enough, he sent to Ephesus, thirty-seven miles distant, and requested the elders of the Ephesian church to come to meet him, as he was in haste to get to Jerusalem and could not stop at Ephesus.

### ITS CHARACTERISTICS. Vs. 18-35.

18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,

19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house,

21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*.

27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

We know of no passage in the word of God that describes so minutely the work of a holy ministry. It is a touching farewell address. It is worthy of much study. Notice, he calls them to witness that he had done and been all that he here describes. We will take up these characteristics in detail. "Serving the Lord." He was not the servant of the people, but of Christ. Many churches treat the preacher as if he were a slave to do their bidding. Paul in many places in his epistles calls himself a servant (bond slave) of Jesus Christ. "With all humility of mind." How humble he was—the ambassador of Jesus Christ, the leading apostle of Christianity, yet toiling with his hands, to support himself at his trade that he might preach the gospel. "Many tears." He was not a stoical hardhearted man, who never felt anything. He had a warm, loving heart. Some people think salvation stupefies us so that the natural sensibilities are benumbed; not so. The true ministry bathes its prayers, for men, in tears. "And temptations." All great and successful servants of God have great temptations. It is necessary to their spiritual development. Jesus the greatest of all preachers had great temptations. The more we are like these great preachers the greater will be our temptations. "The trying of your faith is more precious than that of gold that perishes." These temptations or trials were caused by the laying in wait of the Jews to kill him. These trials of persecution by his own countrymen afflicted him more than any of the many others that he had, for he had great love for his own countrymen (Rom. 10:1). It hurt his soul more that the personal violence he received from the heathen. Many times the Jews tried to kill him (See Chapter 9:23, 29; 23:12 and 20:3). "Kept back nothing." The figure is of a man through whose mouth God's message is flowing, and

some truths of the truths are unpalatable to his hearers, but he is so true to God and loyal to the truth that he holds nothing back. The phrase "kept back nothing" is translated "shunned" in verse 27. A class of preachers is hinted at, who keep back unpleasant truth lest it hurt their popularity. Notice he says, "I kept back nothing that was profitable to you." He may have kept back truth that they were not prepared for; he may have kept back meat from the babes in Christ, who needed milk. Jesus himself said to his disciples, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

"Testifying." He says in another place that God had made him both a minister and a witness. Testimony is the relation of personal experience. So Paul told his experience of salvation and faith; told how he changed his mind towards God, and trusted Jesus for salvation. Testimony among ministers is becoming a lost art today. Would we had more of it. Here repentance seems to be put before faith. Really both go together. We can hardly do one without doing the other. Since repentance means a change of mind on the question of sin, and is wrought in the consenting soul of the sinner, we can hardly repent without also exercising faith. To have faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ is to trust in his infinite sacrifice by a faith that rests on nothing else, having discarded any merit of our own in seeking salvation. "Bound in the spirit." He felt constrained in his spirit to do all the will of God and he was constrained to go to Jerusalem, because that seemed to him to be the will of God. "Not knowing the things that shall befall me." This was faith indeed—he was determined to go to Jerusalem because he believed God willed it and yet he did not know what he was to meet there. But he trusted God for the unknown future. This was entire consecration. If we can not trust God for the unknown future, we are not entirely consecrated.

"The Holy Ghost witnesseth." He said the Holy Ghost had prophesied to him that bonds and afflictions awaited him in every city to which he went. The Holy Spirit often gives the saints a vision or premonition of what is coming. And the same Spirit that thus prophesies is also the *Comforter* in their afflictions. "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life as

dear unto myself." He counted his life now, only as it might be of value, not to himself, but to Jesus. The figure here is of a racer who cares nothing for the effort he puts into the race if he can only finish it with the joy that comes from success. The joyful finishing of his course he tells us in 2 Tim. 4:6 became a fact; "for I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand, I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith," and he did finish his course with joy, for he said, "henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of rejoicing." And the saints finish their course thus in their latter days. Dr. Payson, the devoted Congregational clergyman of Portland, Me., said on his sick bed, "To adopt the figurative language of Bunyan, I might date this letter from the land of Beulah of which I have been for some weeks a happy inhabitant. The celestial city is full in my view. Its glories beam upon me. Its breezes fan me, its odors are wafted to me, its sounds strike upon my ear, and its spirit is breathed into my heart. The sun of righteousness has been gradually drawing nearer and nearer, appearing larger and larger as he approached, and now he fills the whole hemisphere, pouring forth a flood of glory, in which I seem to float like an insect in the beams of the sun, exulting, yet almost trembling, while I gaze on his excessive brightness; and wondering, with unutterable wonder, why God should thus deign to shine upon a sinful worm. A single heart, and a single tongue, seem altogether inadequate to my wants. I want a whole heart for every emotion, and a whole tongue to express that emotion."

"The ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus." He means to say that he received his commission to preach the gospel from Jesus Christ. In another place (2 Cor. 4:1) he says "seeing we have received this ministry we faint not." Paul believed he had a special call to the ministry. He did not go into it as some do in our day because he felt he could do more good than in anything else. But he felt a "woe is me if I preach not the gospel," because he felt a special call to the work. Notice two things in his ministry—he "preached" the kingdom of God" and was called also "to testify the gospel of the grace of God." His business was to be an advocate—preach the kingdom and

“testify” to its grace. This is still the twofold business of the preacher. Such a ministry will always be successful and effective.

He had a persuasion amounting to knowledge that he would see their faces no more. This knowledge must have been imparted by the Holy Spirit, who does sometimes give the saints in these days a vision of things that are to come in their own experiences. Doubtless the general impression had come to him that his work was nearly done. He had been told by the Holy Spirit that bonds and imprisonments awaited him everywhere. His martyrdom occurred about five years later.

He then calls them to witness to the fact that he was “pure from the blood of all.” He had done his duty by them in the fear of God. Their blood was not on his garments. “The form of expression is striking and memorable. It is borrowed from the crime of murder and the method by which guilt is ordinarily brought home to the criminal. In many cases conviction depends on blood being found on the clothes of the murderer. Hence in almost all cases of violence we hear of desperate efforts made by the terrified evil doer to efface the stain. This is the conception that leaps into the apostle’s mind. He can not hope that all who have heard the gospel from his lips in that city are now in Christ. If they died in their sins, how unspeakable the loss—the loss of the soul! He shudders at the thought; and in order to quicken their diligence, when they should return to their labor, he endeavors to impart some of his anxiety to the elders. He in effect invites them to look to their hands and garments to make sure that there is no blood on them.” (Arnot.)

“I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God.” In verse 20 he said “he had kept nothing back.” Now he reiterates it. God has “counsel” which he gives to his servants to deliver to the people. Paul does not say that he had given the whole counsel of God, but he had not *shunned* to do it. Of course he did not know the whole counsel of God, but gave all God moved on him to give.

“Take heed to yourselves.” The first duty of a preacher and pastor is to watch over himself. If he does not keep a fresh, vigorous growing experience how can he expect his flock to be any better than he is. “Like shepherd, like sheep” is an old and true proverb.



“And to all the flock.” The figure of a shepherd and his sheep as applied to a pastor and his people is often used in the Old Testament, and also by Jesus himself. He does not say they were to take heed to the flock but “*all the flock*”—every one; the poor, the unfortunate, those of cross, contrary disposition—all are to be looked after. The Holy Ghost had made them *overseers*. “The Rev. Version translates it bishops. In the New Testament, the term elder refers to the same office. There have to be leaders in the church. But nowhere does the New Testament speak of popes, cardinals or men to “be boss” and “lord it over God’s heritage.”

These overseers are put there by the Holy Ghost to “*feed the flock*,” not to fleece them. The great business of the leaders of the church should be to feed it. Yet some in these days some think we preach too much to the church. “Which he hath purchased with his own blood.” This and similar passages show how much Jesus loves the church. Paul tells us in his letter written to the church to which these elders belonged, “Christ loved the church and gave himself for it that he might sanctify it.” So we have the reason why he purchased it with his own blood. It was in order to sanctify it. Just before he went to heaven he said in his high priest’s prayer “For their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified.” It strikes us with great force that Jesus loves this institution that is still in the world; called by his name; still enduring the reproach of the world because it is his representative, and called by his name; misunderstood and often weak and imperfect though ever conscious of its great mission. Truly does St. John say, “having loved his own, he loved them unto the end,” and then gave his own blood to redeem it from endless death. A day will come—his coronation day—when he will come before the throne with the church to his Father, “Washed in his own blood” and present it “faultless before the throne of God.” Thank God that Jesus loves his church with such tender love.

He tells them to do three things. 1. “Take heed therefore to yourselves.” (Vs. 28.) 2. Look out for the wolves—outside enemies that should come in among them to destroy them. (Vs. 29.) This refers to false teachers who came into Ephesus from

other places. 3. Also false teachers should arise in their own midst (Vs. 30) and make division and scism. False doctrine has been the great bane and hindrance of the church of God in all ages. It is suffering from it today. Jesus and the apostles were continually opposing it. They never advocated the sickly sentiment "It makes no difference what you believe if you are only sincere." False doctrine (heresy) is one of the works of the flesh. (See Gal. 5:20.) What poison is to the body heresy is to the church. It is ever creeping in and needs to be constantly guarded against. The church must keep filled with the Holy Ghost or false doctrine will abound. Holiness is the only antidote against false doctrine. The church today is being captured by liberalism because it refuses to go on to entire sanctification.

On account of false doctrine coming in, he commands them to "watch" against it. That is our business in this age as well.

He forever settles the question of the deity of Jesus, when he says in verse 28 that the church is of "God who purchased it with his own blood." Deity joined with humanity made the atonement effective—gave it its virtue and efficacy.

He now commends them first to God; second to his word. He gives us two reasons why he commends them to "the word of his grace." 1. It is able to build us up. 2. It is able to give us "inheritance among all that are sanctified." In other words, it makes us strong in this world and fits us for the world to come at the same time. "The foundation is Jesus Christ. God is the great master builder: the doctrine of his grace or mercy points out the order and manner, as well as the extent, etc., of the building. Let us observe the order of these things:—1. The soul of man, which was formerly the habitation of God is now in a state of ruin. 2. The ruins of this soul must be repaired, that it again may become an habitation of God through the Spirit. 3. Jesus Christ is the only foundation on which this house can be rebuilt. 4. The doctrine of God's grace is the model or plan, according to which the building can be raised. 5. When re-edified each is to be a living temple of the Lord, made inwardly pure and outwardly righteous, and thus prepared for a state of bliss. 6. Being children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus and sanctified by spirit, they have a right to the heavenly inheritance;

for only children of the family can possess the heavenly estate. Thus we find they must be saved by grace, and be thereby the children of God; be sanctified by his Spirit and then, being prepared for, they are removed in due time into the heavenly inheritance." (Clarke.) "I have coveted no man's silver." A covetous preacher is like a man with a loathsome ulcer gnawing at his vitals, for covetousness is idolatry.

He also tells them that they knew well that he had earned his own living at his trade, in Ephesus (Acts 18:3 and 18). Paul not only supported himself but others (Vs. 34), showing that he must have been a superior workman. The people whom he supported must have been sickly.

He quotes a saying of the Lord Jesus not found in the gospels. It must have been one of the sayings of Jesus, so startling as to be well remembered by mankind in general, although not written down—"It is more blessed to give than to receive." There is a blessing that comes to the liberal soul in the act of giving that is even greater than the gift to the receiver. If a consecrated man gives a thousand dollars to help the church in a community that needs the church, he confers a blessing on the whole town, but he gets a greater blessing than they do in his own soul. "The liberal soul shall be made fat," says the writer of the Proverbs.

What a sublime passage is this farewell address! A man full of a high purpose to do his duty and at the same time tender as a child and his spiritual children weeping and kissing him as he prays and bids them farewell. Something is wrong when a faithful minister is allowed to part with the people without any regrets on their part. "No other passage in the New Testament of the same length presents so clear and vivid a picture of the characteristic feature of Paul's ministry: his theme, repentance and faith (Vs. 21), enforced by a heralding of the kingdom of God (Vs. 25), a kingdom and inheritance of grace (Vs. 32); his spirit, humility (Vs. 19), courage (Vs. 20, 27), unswerving purpose (Vs. 24), ceaseless industry, ardent feeling (Vs. 31), unselfishness (Vs. 33-35); his method, both a public preaching and a private conversation (Vs. 20). This address then affords a suggestion of what are the essential elements of a successful ministry." (Abbott.) Richard Baxter has perhaps given us the

best analysis of this wonderful address thus: "Here we are taught: Our general business: *servng the Lord*; our special work: *taking heed to ourselves and all the flock*; the substance of our doctrine: *repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*; the places and manner of our teaching: *publicly and from house to house*; the object and internal manner: *warnng everyone, night and day, with all humility of mind and with tears*; the faithfulness and integrity that are requisite: *I have kept back no thing that was profitable unto you. I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God*; the innocence and self denial to be used: *I have coveted no man's silver or gold*; the patience and resolution to be exercised: *none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus*; and once more, the motives to engage us to all this: *The Holy Ghost has made us overseers*; the church we feed is *the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood*. Write this upon your hearts and it will do yourselves and the church more good than twenty years of study of the lower things which often employ your thoughts; which though they get you greater applause in the world, yet, if separated from these, will make you but 'sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.' "

#### ITS RELIGIOUS SELF-DENIAL. Vs. 36-38.

36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,

38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

It is a world of meeting and parting, which makes us long for the better world where no parting comes, but thank God, holiness makes us "meet" for the inheritance with the saints in light, where no parting ever is known!

## CHAPTER XXI.

### TESTS OF ENTIRE CONSECRATION.

Tests Put Upon Us by Our Friends. Vs. 1-16. Tests Put Upon Us by Our Enemies. Vs. 17-40.

#### TESTS PUT UPON US BY OUR FRIENDS. Vs. 1-16.

1 And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the *day* following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara :

2 And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth.

3 Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre : for there the ship was to unlade her burden.

4 And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days : who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

5 And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way ; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till *we were* out of the city : and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.

6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship ; and they returned home again.

7 And when we had finished *our* course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

8 And the next *day* we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Cæsarea : and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was *one* of the seven ; and abode with him.

9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

10 And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judæa a certain prophet, named Agabus.

11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles.

12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine

heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

15 And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

16 There went with us also *certain* of the disciples of Cæsarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.

Entire consecration is a very practical matter. It meets its tests constantly. It is one thing to struggle at the altar of prayer until we have put all upon it. But it is another matter to keep all upon the altar, day after day; year after year. Many have a struggle to give up, but they do not stay given up. They do not bind the sacrifice upon the altar. Paul never flinched in his consecration. No matter what came. We see him in these verses, meeting the test laid upon him by his friends. This is often more difficult than the tests of our enemies. Our friends will try to keep us from duty out of a mistaken regard for our welfare—afraid we will be hurt or our reputation suffer. So Paul found it in these instances.

Let us notice the history that brings us to his test by his friends. Bidding farewell to the Ephesian elders at Miletus, he and his company continued the journey to Jerusalem, going by sea. The first stop was at Tyre. Here he found some disciples of the Lord Jesus. So the company remained there for a week. Here was another test of his consecration, for these disciples tried to persuade him not to go to Jerusalem. But he was "bound in the Spirit" (see Acts 20:22) to go and they could not persuade him to vary from what he believed to be his duty. His friends knew the danger, but he cared for nothing but what he believed to be duty. The parting meeting was a prayer meeting in the open air regardless of surroundings.

From Tyre they continued their journey down the coast until they came to Caesarea, and put up at the house of Philip the evangelist. Here the writer says were four daughters of Philip the evangelist, who were inspired teachers. So we see the example and authority for women preaching, here. Paul met a severe test from his friends here that nearly broke his heart. There

was a prophet here by the name of Agabus who came to visit him. Probably he was the same man mentioned in Acts 11:28.

He took Paul's girdle and bound his own hands and feet and said that the Jews would do the same by Paul when he got to Jerusalem. The symbolic acting out of their messages by prophets was a common thing in Old Testament times (See Isa. 20:2; Jer. 13:1; Ezek. 4:1). He declared that the Holy Spirit had explicitly shown him that the Jews would treat Paul in the same way at Jerusalem; that is, that he would be bound and imprisoned. Agabus had already prophesied a great famine and it had taken place (Acts 11:28). So now this latter prophecy had a great effect upon the disciples. They interpreted the prophecy as a warning for him not to go to Jerusalem. But it was rather designed as information so that Paul would be prepared to encounter what was before him. Years before when he was converted, the Lord had shown him how great things he must suffer for his sake. (Acts 9:16.) So these premonitions were nothing new. His friends try to dissuade him from going further. "Yet his steadfastness to duty, though confronted here with a prospect of danger unto death, yielded not. No ordinary measure of heroism was it that induced such fixed resistance to the counter-treaties of such and so many loving friends. But the terms in which he declares his persistency of self devotion are very touching. As expressing the purest, sublimest affection to Christ and to Christlike human friends the answer has no human parallel: *What do ye weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not to be bound only but to die for the name of the Lord Jesus.* This tender, lofty utterance furnishes a fitting counterpart to the many strong assertions of consecration and self-sacrifice with which his epistles richly abound. And the instant carrying out of this loving and unselfish protest with an unflinching heroism, fixes in our minds an immovable conviction of the apostle's absolute truthfulness in all his high professions of devotion to his Lord.

"Responding to the impression produced by these intense words of Paul, recognizing in them a clear indication of that divine will by which his career had been so mysteriously guided, the true-hearted disciples ceased all further opposition, and ac-

quiesced in his decision and in expressing the *will of the Lord Jesus*. And the fact is singularly suggestive that the very disciples that would have hindered Paul's arrest at Jerusalem, *by that arrest* were privileged with an unrestrained fellowship with him for two long years." (O. E. Daggett.)

How many have swerved from duty because of the solicitation of friends. But Paul had a real consecration. He really meant it when he said, "for me to live is Christ." We remember that the family of Jesus tried to swerve him from the path of duty: Happy the man whom friends cannot move to compromise.

So the whole company "took up their carriages" (baggage). We see here an illustration of how words change. In the days when the Bible was translated into English the word carriage meant that which was carried. Now it means the vehicle that carries the baggage. And so they went to Jerusalem where the brethren gladly received them.

#### TESTS PUT UPON US BY OUR ENEMIES. Vs. 17-40.

17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

18 And the *day* following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

20 And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:

21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children, neither to walk after the customs.

22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.

23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them;

24 Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave *their* heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but *that* thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.

25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written *and* concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep



themselves from *things* offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.

26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

27 And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,

28 Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all *men* every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

29 (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

34 And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.

35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people.

36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

37 And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?

38 Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?

39 But Paul said, I am a man *which am* a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.

40 And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto *them* in the Hebrew tongue, saying,

Paul had stood the test by his friends and had not swerved from duty. Now he was to be tested by his enemies. Would his consecration endure the test? If we are entirely consecrated we will be tested at every point. It is a question, who will be our greatest tempters to swerve—our friends or our enemies.

The day after their arrival St. Paul made a call upon St. James, who was the brother of Jesus, and stood at the head of the church at Jerusalem. All the elders or officers of the church at Jerusalem were present, and Paul made a very minute, detailed account of his labors and his great success. They seem to have had a praise meeting over the report. They then spoke of the special difficulty of the work at Jerusalem. It was because there were thousands of Jews who accepted Christianity as from God, who still held to the obligations of the ceremonial law, and who thought that Gentiles could become Christians only by being circumcised. These Jews too had been told by some one that Paul had taught all Jewish Christians to forsake the ceremonial law and not circumcise their children. This was a false accusation. Paul had taught "that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision were of any consequence (Gal. 5:6; 6:15), that the uncircumcised need not be circumcised and that the circumcised should not be uncircumcised (1 Cor. 7:18-19); that Jew and Gentile are alike guilty before God, and are saved only by the grace of God through Jesus Christ. (Rom., chapter 1-3.)"

They told Paul that this hostile multitude, composed of enemies of the gospel and Jewish Christians hostile would come to him to hear what he had to say, in the matter.

So they advised him to go to the temple with four men, who had a "vow upon them" and purify himself with them. He could by thus going show his enemies that he was not a foe to the law of Moses: that like Jesus he came not to destroy but to fulfill the law. The vow here was undoubtedly the vow of the Nazarites who were the total abstinence people of the Old Dispensation. To go through all the rites and ceremonies and make all the offerings was expensive. And Paul by paying the expenses of the four would show the enemy that he was not trying to tear down the law of Moses. He did not believe there was any virtue in them, nor any harm. He always tried to be

“all things to all men if by any means he might win some.” Here he sought to be a Jew to the Jews if by any means he might win some. Numbers 6:13-18 tells us what the offerings were. Not until these offerings were made could they shave their heads and have their hair cut. So all the people could know that he “walked orderly;” that is that he walked according to rule. Paul did nothing wrong but he was governed by policy, rather than by his own preference. A holy man will never gain anything in the sight of his enemies by a course of policy. They will lie about him and prepare false charges against him anyway, no matter what he does. Paul made a mistake, no doubt. Holiness does not give perfect judgment or show us always just how to deal with bitter opposition.

So Paul took the four men and went to the temple at Jerusalem to finish the ceremonies. All went well for nearly seven days, when as Paul and his four companions entered the inner temple, certain Asiatic Jews saw them and laid hands on Paul, calling for help, accusing him of taking Greeks (Gentiles) into the inner temple, which was contrary to law. This was all supposition. They had seen Trophimus, an Ephesian, with Paul on the street, and anxious to find something against Paul, they jumped at the conclusion that Paul had taken him into the inner temple. Notice the high compliment that these enemies unconsciously gave Paul. “*This is the man* that teacheth all men everywhere against the people and law and this place.” Although the charge was exaggerated and essentially false yet it showed the great reputation and influence of Paul. Notice too, his enemies cried, “Help,” as if Paul were making an attack upon them. They considered it an attack of sacrilege against the temple.

Nor was it mere policy on Paul’s part to conciliate these enemies. His act was farther reaching; it showed the Christian Jews, who had not yet wholly got their Jewish prejudices, that Paul was not trying to destroy the Mosaic law, and thus it helped their weakness.

The result was a great tumult. The whole city was aroused. Paul was dragged out of the temple and the multitude sought to kill him. It did seem as if he had escaped former dangers, only

to be killed at Jerusalem. But God was watching over his servant. "A man is immortal until his work is done." See how God intervened through heathen soldiers. God had allowed the Romans to conquer Judea, who were obliged to pay tribute or taxes to the Roman every year. This taxation was a bitter experience for the haughty Jews, and nearly every time of taxation there had been rioting. Hence the Roman government had built a tower, called the Tower of Antonia, close by the temple and garrisoned it with soldiers to keep the peace. We remember that Luke speaks of an insurrection where Pilate had killed some of the Jews right in the midst of their sacrifices. (See Luke 13:1.)

This castle or tower was built so that it could command a view of the part of the city adjacent to the temple. The riot was instantly seen and the chief captain or tribune was on the ground at once with his soldiers, who interfered and the Jews stopped beating Paul. It was the business of the soldiers to keep order. They had no interest in Paul, rather they were prejudiced against him as a disturber of the peace. So they bound him with two chains. Then the chief captain began to examine into the matter, demanding that they should tell who he was and what he had done.

The mob was as ignorant of what they were doing as they usually are in such cases, and could not tell. Some said one thing, some another. As the chief captain could not ascertain anything definite he commanded the soldiers to carry Paul into the castle. The multitude pressed close upon them, crying "away with him"—the same that they had against Jesus, "Away with him" or in other words "kill him."

Paul addressed the chief captain in Greek saying, "May I speak with thee?" The chief captain was astonished, asking, "Can'st thou speak Greek?" He supposed Paul was an Egyptian imposter who claimed to be the Messiah and had created disturbances previous to this.

Paul's reply subdues the chief captain. The native dignity and character of Paul asserted a supremacy over the soldiers as Paul said, "I am a Jew of Tarsus, in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city." Tarsus had the reputation of being a city of great culture. We see here that it is perfectly proper to assert

ourselves in emergencies. Paul did not do this to advance his own interests but to help on the cause he loved. Unawed by the mob, badly beaten, in chains between two soldiers, he asks the chief captain for permission to speak to the crowd from the stairs and with a gesture, silencing the mob he addressed them in the Hebrew language. He had no fear whatever. "We no longer wonder that this man wished to go into the theatre at Ephesus and face the mob there." (Acts 19:30.)



## CHAPTER XXII.

### A SAINT DEFENDS HIMSELF.

He Gives His Experience as His Defence. Vs. 1-23. He Stands Up  
for His Rights. Vs. 24-30.

HE GIVES HIS EXPERIENCE AS HIS DEFENCE. Vs. 1-23.

1 Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence *which I make* now unto you.

2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)

3 I am verily a man *which am* a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.

4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,

13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

17 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and *then* lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a *fellow* from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.

23 And as they cried out, and cast off *their* clothes, and threw dust into the air,

Some teach that we should be non-combatants and make no defence when attacked. This is not scriptural. Jesus and Paul both defended themselves—not for their own sakes, however, but for the sake of the truth which they represented. It was a singular way too of defence—the relation of experience. Paul had an experience in which the Almighty was a partner. This made his course authorized of God. Happy is the man whose course is so in accordance with the divine plan that he has no apologies to make. His experience is his justification because his course is of God.

It is noticeable that the heathen attacked him because his preaching was emptying the temple of Diana. And the Jews accused him of teaching what was against the temple at Jerusalem. Paul made trouble for false religions. Holiness always does and when holiness is attacked by any religionists it proves their religion false. They, who have the Spirit never attack the work of the Spirit.

Paul was a great scholar. We notice that the chief captain



was astonished to hear him speak Greek. And now when he speaks in Hebrew, the multitude are instantly quieted. He tells them that he is a Jew (Phil. 3:5) born in Tarsus, but educated in Jerusalem; that Gamaliel, one of the best teachers of the day was his instructor; that he was well read in Jewish law, and very zealous for God; as much as any of them. This last sentence is an adroit way of getting their sympathy. In another place he said he had lived in all good conscience before God. Even in his persecution of the Christian church, he was honest. He put men to death for Jesus' sake, thinking he was doing right. A false zeal has lighted the fires of persecution in all ages. It is not enough to have education and religion, if we do not have the kind of religion that fills the heart with love. He then goes on to give his experience as recorded in Acts 9. See our notes there. There are three accounts of his conversion that should be read together (See them in Acts 9 and 26 and here). In Acts 9 we have Luke's account of Paul's conversion. But here we have it from his own lips.

We get here, too, a little more light on the character of Ananias whom God sent to lead Paul into the light. He calls him, "One Ananias, a devout man according to the law." This was evidently said to gain the favor of his hearers and give them less ground of accusation against him by showing that God sent a devout Jew to lead him into the light.

Paul was a good debater. He knew how to make a strong defence. "With great wisdom and tact he shapes his whole address. He defers to their manifestly hostile feeling by calling it a defence (Greek, apology). He avows himself a Jew, refers to his pure Jewish blood, his place of birth, and his early and thorough training in the knowledge and practice of the law at Jerusalem. He recalls that which they also well knew of his early life. He repeats the story of his surpassing zeal and frenzy in active persecution of Christian disciples; how he went even to Damascus for this purpose, under commission of the high priest and elders. He thus dwelt upon his fiercely fanatical career in order that the question might arise in their minds by anticipation, what had wrought so extreme a change. Surely they must feel and know that nothing less than an irresistible

motive could have turned one of such indomitable fiery zeal so utterly against himself and his kindred and associates, against all his previous beliefs, prejudices, practices and hates.' (Butler.) Surely the conversion of Paul was a miracle almost equal to the resurrection of Jesus. His conversion and the resurrection of Jesus are the two pillars on which the arch of New Testament truths rests.

He then tells them that Jesus appeared to him there a year later (Gal. 1:18) in the temple, by a special revelation, as he was praying. This shows that he had retained his veneration for that holy place, when they were charging him with talking against it. (Acts 21:28.) It was while Paul was praying that he had this revelation. It was while Jesus was praying that the Spirit came upon him (Luke 3:21-22); it was while Jesus was praying that he was transfigured (Luke 9:29). The time of prayer is often the time when God gives his people special revelation.

So Paul here gives the Jews three proofs that his course was of God. 1. The Lord appeared to him at Damascus and told him to go into the city of Damascus and receive his commission to preach this gospel (Vs. 10). 2. Ananias came to him by divine direction to give it (Vs. 14, 15). 3. Jesus appeared to him in the temple. Surely Paul was not amiss in going to the temple to purify himself when he had met the Lord in the temple after his conversion.

He declares that Jesus told him in the temple to "Depart: for I will send thee far hence to the Gentiles." This was too much for the national pride of his audience. They had been educated in the belief that the Messiah was only for the Jews, and that all other nations were dogs. They expected the Messiah to drive out the hated Romans and make Jerusalem the capital of the world. Jesus himself was mobbed at Nazareth for teaching similar truths (Luke 4:28, 29), and had really been crucified for the same reason. The audience immediately on hearing this utterance cried out with a loud voice, cast off their outer garments and threw dust in the air. If Paul had not been guarded by Roman soldiers they would have stoned him as they did Stephen.

## HE STANDS UP FOR HIS RIGHTS. Vs. 24-30.

24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

26 When the centurion heard *that*, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.

27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was *free* born.

29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

30 On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from *his* bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

Paul was brought into the castle, as the Jews raged like wild beasts seeking his life. The captain commanded that he be "examined by scourging." The captain could not understand what he had said to the multitude to stir their anger for Paul had spoken in Greek. So he proposed to have him whipped until he should tell what he had said to make them so angry. As the soldiers were binding him, in a kind of leather harness to a post, according to the custom, Paul said to a centurion, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a Roman citizen, and uncondemned?" This was a protest. Holy people have a right to protest against injustice and to assert their rights. To punish a Roman citizen untried and uncondemned, especially to torture him was one of the highest crimes under the Roman law. This was the second time Paul had asserted his Roman citizenship. The other time was at Philippi. (See Acts 16:38.)

This was a serious matter and the centurion reported it to his chief, who astonished and alarmed, came at once to Paul, and asked him if it was true. And Paul replied that it was.

Now the chief captain was in trouble. He did not know what to do with Paul. He himself had purchased Roman citizenship

with a great sum of money, but Paul was free born, being a native of the cultured city of Tarsus, whose inhabitants had the rights of Roman citizenship. So the next day he was determined to find out who he was by calling the Jewish Sanhedrin together, and let Paul speak for himself before them. Thus he might gain knowledge sufficient to shape his future course.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### A SAINT MAKES HIS DEFENCE BEFORE THE CHURCH AUTHORITIES.

1 And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.

3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, *thou* whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?

4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?

5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men *and* brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.

8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes *that were* of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.

10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring *him* into the castle.

11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

12 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

13 And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.

14 And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.

15 Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would enquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.

16 And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.

17 Then Paul called one of the centurions unto *him*, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him.

18 So he took him, and brought *him* to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto *him*, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee.

19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went *with him* aside privately, and asked *him*, What is that thou hast to tell me?

20 And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would enquire somewhat of him more perfectly.

21 But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.

22 So the chief captain *then* let the young man depart, and charged *him*, See thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me.

23 And he called unto *him* two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Cæsarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;

24 And provide *them* beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring *him* safe unto Felix the governor.

25 And he wrote a letter after this manner:

26 Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix *sendeth* greeting.

27 This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.

28 And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council:

29 Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds.

30 And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what *they had* against him. Farewell.

31 Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought *him* by night to Antipatris.

32 On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle:

33 Who, when they came to Cæsarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.

34 And when the governor had read *the letter*, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that *he was* of Cilicia;

35 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.

It is astonishing but nevertheless true that every advance in religion, every improvement in its administration has found its bitterest enemies in the church, among the professed worshippers of God. The bitterest persecution that the great evangelists and reformers have had to suffer, has been at the hands of religionists, usually those who are the ecclesiastical leaders. Jesus Christ, Paul, Luther, Savonarola, Wesley, Knox, and Finney found their greatest foes not in the outside wicked world, but in the bosom of the church. The Spanish Inquisition with all its horrors was in the professed church. The modern holiness movement as might be expected according to the voice of history has had its bitterest foes in the ranks of the visible church. Had it not found them there it might be well questioned whether it was in the apostolic succession; it would certainly lack one of the proofs that it is of God. We now find Paul talking to the Jewish Sanhedrim, to whom he makes his defence.

He is addressing the highest council of the Jews. The same that condemned Jesus and Stephen to die. Luke says Paul "earnestly beholding them" made his defence. It seems to us there are indications or proofs here that his eyesight was defective.

Several similar passages seem to show that. In verse 5 Paul said that he did not know that it was the high priest who commanded him to be smitten. He did not recognize him. We find several other passages that show that his eyesight was defective. (See Gal. 4:13-15.) No doubt this was his "thorn in the flesh" of which he speaks (2 Cor. 12:7). Perhaps this injury came from the fearful stoning he received at Lystra (Acts 14:19).

He addresses the council as an equal, saying, "Men and brethren." It is thought by some that he himself was once a member of this council. He then went on to say that in his whole course of life he had been conscientious. He had been honest in living up to his convictions.

This enraged the high priest and he commanded some of the bystanders to smite Paul on the mouth. He had already preju-

dice against Paul as guilty and to hear him assert his innocence enraged him. He had him smitten on the mouth, to shut his mouth, as uttering blasphemy. Paul replied, "God shall smite thee thou whited wall." Paul here used the same figure that Jesus used in speaking of the chief priests and scribes. Everybody understood the figure. The Jews were accustomed to white wash their tombs, which while full of corruption were made by the white wash to appear clean. This was the character of Ananias. (See Matt. 23:27, and see what Jesus said of the same characters.) Paul gave his reason for thus describing him as a white wall, "Sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest thou me to be smitten?" It was rank injustice. Ananias was sitting to judge Paul for breaking the ceremonial law and he himself was breaking the Mosaic law that required careful investigation before punishment. Paul was righteously indignant at this injustice and uttered a prophecy of the doom of that corrupt high priest. God did smite him five years later. "Ananias had been appointed high priest in A. D. 48 by the Romans. In A. D. 52 he was sent to Rome to answer before the emperor on a charge of oppression brought by the Samaritans. The result is doubtful; but the best solution seems to be that Ananias was not formally deposed but, upon the murder of Jonathan (who had been appointed in his place during the suspension) in A. D. 57, he resumed his functions. This high priest's character for violence and lawlessness suggests that a guilty conscience assumed the guise of zeal against blasphemy when he ordered the bystanders to smite Paul on the mouth." (Smith.)

Five years later, says Josephus, in a tumult begun by his own son he was besieged and taken in his own palace, where having in vain attempted to hide himself, in an old aqueduct, he was dragged out and slain. The Spirit of God inspired this prophecy of Paul without doubt. Numerous instances of this spirit of prophecy were found in modern times, among the Quakers, when in their persecution in England they prophesied the judgment of God upon their persecutors, even naming the kind of death of which they should die, which was fulfilled to the letter.

The bystanders protested in turn, saying to Paul, "Revilest



thou God's high priest?" Paul in turn made no apology for what he had said except to say he did not know he was reviling God's high priest. He had respect for the office, but not for the man. He would not revile anyone who belonged to God, but he did not know that it was the high priest. It is our duty to respect authority and office, for the powers that be, are ordained of God. But it is another matter when it comes to the matter of respect for unworthy men, who fill the office.

Again we see his adroitness in debate. He sees there is no hope of a fair trial so he proceeds to obtain the only advantage possible by dividing the assembly. This was not a trick but it was a fair statement and exposition of the truth of the great doctrine of the resurrection, which was one of the great truths that Paul was constantly preaching. He saw that the assembly was divided between the infidel Sadducees, who were opposed to the doctrine of the resurrection and the spirit in man, and he turns their enemies, the Pharisees, against them and their false doctrine and in defence of that part of the truth which he and the Pharisees intensely believed. To be sure the Pharisees did not understand all that the doctrine of the resurrection implied. Paul knew it in its fullest degree, as embraced and proved by the resurrection of Jesus. And this was really, when brought down to its last analysis, the very reason why Paul was before the Sanhedrim, for his great theme was Jesus and the Resurrection. This was the great point at issue in that day. Paul says in Rom. 10:9 that the condition of salvation is, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead thou shalt be saved." So Paul easily rallied the friends of the truth to its defense, for it was Jesus and the Resurrection that were on trial at this time, in the person of Paul their representative. He so declares, "Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." This was the reason he cried, "I am a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee."

This divided the house at once, and the Scribes, who were Pharisees at once, cried, "We find no evil in this man." Paul's object is accomplished. The truth is vindicated and the court breaks up in confusion. The more respectable party pronounces

his innocence. At the same time Paul wished if possible to retain his hold on his brother Pharisees and lead them into the full degree of the doctrine of the Resurrection as fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

We see that the Sadducees recognized that they were defeated in their attempt to have sentence passed upon him, for they attempted afterwards to assassinate him.

The chief captain hearing the tumult, again sent soldiers to rescue Paul, who was in danger of being pulled to pieces, and bring him into the castle. Jesus had told his disciples when he sent them forth, "Lo I am with you always even unto the end of the age." This meant those to whom he spoke. It means also all since that time, who seek to spread his truths and establish his cause. This is our consolation and inspiration when men oppose us. So was it with the great apostle to the Gentiles. No one ever had a more strenuous conflict than Paul. Because he was so effective in planting the gospel among the Gentiles, therefore Satan made it as difficult as possible. But if there is a powerful adversary, there is also an all powerful friend, who is more than those that be against us. That night "the Lord stood by him," and encouraged him. This was the fourth time the Lord Jesus had appeared to him: in the highway at the gates of Damascus (Acts 9); while praying in the temple at Jerusalem (Acts 22:17-18) and at Corinth when his life was threatened (Acts 18:9, 10). Paul was getting quite well acquainted with Jesus. Such acquaintance begets confidence, even greater than the confidence of our faith when we first believe. No wonder he said in his letter to Timothy near the close of his life, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." (2 Tim.1:12.) The Lord said to him, "Be of good cheer Paul." He called him by name. It would appear from this that Paul was greatly depressed in spirit—not personally because of his danger, but because of his fear lest he might be either killed or imprisoned so that he could not make his contemplated visit to Rome, for the Lord Jesus had told him, "As thou hast borne testimony of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." His heart was bent on going to Rome to preach the gospel. He had prom-

ised to do it. His ambitions were to live only to preach the gospel (See Rom. 1:10). His ambition was to "finish his course with joy" (Acts 20:24), and Jesus here assured him that he should do so. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." There is a divine hand directing our affairs. It was leading Paul. It leads you and me if we are as fully committed to God.

The next day his enemies laid a plot to assassinate him. About forty of them were in the plot, binding themselves by an oath, neither to eat nor to drink until they had slain him. They went to the chief priest and elders and requested them to send for Paul as if they wished to ask some question and they were to kill him, when he came into their presence. Herodotus tells us that assassination had become a frequent occurrence at Jerusalem in these times. As far as their vow was concerned, it did not mean very much, for they had easy ways of securing absolution from it in accordance with the rules of the Jewish Rabbis.

The large number in the plot led to its defeat; for Paul's nephew heard of it and entered the castle and told Paul, who had him repeat it to the chief captain, Lysias. The latter let the young man depart, charging him to keep the matter secret.

Paul might have said the Lord told me that I should be protected from danger in Jerusalem and I will take no precaution in the matter. It was his business just the same to use all the safeguards possible. Because God has promised to take care of us and protect us does not excuse us from doing our best to take care of ourselves. We are to trust God as if he were to do it all, and then do all we can as if it all depended on our own efforts; in all the emergencies of life. So the chief captain detailed a guard of soldiers and sent him away by night under their protection to Felix, the governor at Caesarea. It was a large guard, consisting of four hundred and seventy, but none too large to guard one man in the estimation of Lysias, for that man was a Roman citizen. The chief captain sent a word of explanation with the letter. The chief captain was glad to have the responsibility off his hands. The journey would require about two days, as Caesarea was sixty-eight miles distant. When the governor had read the letter, he inquired to what province Paul belonged, and said, "When thine accusers are come, I will

then hear thee." He consigned Paul to "Herod's Judgment Hall" for safe keeping. This was a palace built by Herod. In it there were probably, as were usual in such cases, dungeons for prisoners.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### A SAINT MAKING DEFENCE BEFORE THE CIVIL COURT.

1 And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and *with* a certain orator *named* Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.

2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse *him*, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence,

3 We accept *it* always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.

4 Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words.

5 For we have found this man *a* pestilent *fellow*, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes :

6 Who also hath gone about to profane the temple : whom we took, and would have judged according to our law.

7 But the chief captain Lysias came *upon us*, and with great violence took *him* away out of our hands,

8 Commanding his accusers to come unto thee : by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him.

9 And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.

10 Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself :

11 Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship.

12 And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city :

13 Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.

14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets :

15 And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and *toward* men.

17 Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.

18 Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult.

19 Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me.

20 Or else let these same *here* say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council,

21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.

22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of *that* way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.

23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let *him* have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.

24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

26 He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.

27 But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

It is the privilege of the saints when brought before civil magistrates to make their defence. Jesus taught this. Paul practiced it. Jesus told his preachers that the Holy Spirit would help them in so doing.

On the fifth day from Paul's departure from Jerusalem, his vindictive enemies appeared, to further prosecute the case against him. Ananias, the high priest, and the Jewish elders appeared against him bringing their lawyer, whose name was Tertullus, to conduct the case. It will be seen at once that Paul was no ordinary man or they would not have been at so much pains to secure an attorney to prosecute the case. They had no one among them whom they considered competent to conduct the case. So they hired this Roman lawyer.

The lawyer or advocate began by flattering Felix. Then he made three charges against Paul. 1. That he caused factions and scisms among the Jews—"A mover of sedition." 2. That he was a ringleader among the Jews. This was no crime against the Roman government. It was charged as against the laws of the Jews. 3. That he had attempted to profane the temple. This was an offense against the Jewish and Roman law both; as the Romans undertook to protect the Jews in their worship. Tertullus then proceeds to misrepresent the facts. Instead of stating that Lysias had rescued him from a mob, he stated that he had been legally arrested while disturbing the peace. Tertullus refers to no witnesses or evidence to prove his case. Paul shows this omission in verses 17-21. When did truth ever have a fair chance among sinful men, since the days that Jesus was condemned?

The defence of Paul answers the above charges of Tertullus in detail. In verses 11-13 he denies the charge of sedition or scism and demands the proof. As regards the charge of false doctrine, he admits that he is a member of the sect of Nazarenes, but affirms that their doctrine is in accordance with the law and the prophets. He declares that his great endeavor in life is to live right in the sight of God and man. In other words he had hope towards God and no immoral relation towards man. As regards the third charge he declares that he has not violated the temple—no one had found him there doing anything contrary to the law. The Asiatic Jews who made the false accusation should have been there "to object if they had anything against me"—and to testify. But they did not come. There was no testimony against him. The accusation broke down with its own weight. Tertullus began his address with flattery of Felix. Paul began his defence, not with flattery but expressing a ground of confidence in the issue because Felix so well understood the religious views of the Jews.

There was nothing to be said in reply to Paul's defence. The prosecution had nothing they could prove for lack of witnesses. The sequel shows that Felix really decided in favor of Paul, but to show the Jews a favor he said when the chief captain, Lysias, came he would understand better how to decide the matter. But Lysias never came. Paul was kept in easy confinement at Caes-

area, with permission to see and receive favors from his friends whenever he desired. Paul had good opportunity to teach the things of the kingdom during his stay at Caesarea. Thus for two years Caesarea became a center of gospel light and power.

After a short time Paul had opportunity to preach a very plain, practical sermon to Felix himself and his paramour. He had really preached to Felix concerning the Resurrection in his defence (Vs. 15). But now he finds opportunity to preach to him concerning his own needs. Felix sent with his wife Drusilla for Paul to tell him more about the doctrine of Christ. Drusilla was a Jewish princess who had left her husband, the king of Emesa, to live with Felix. Being a Jewess, and daughter of Herod Agrippa I, she was doubtless curious to know about this new faith. Never was the adroitness of Paul shown to better advantage than in this sermon. He expounded the whole system of Christianity, and summed up in a very appropriate application to this couple. "Before him sat an unjust judge—a cruel, rapacious governor. To him he discourses about righteousness, i. e., 'rightness, justice in thought, word, and deed, toward all—toward God and man.' To a Roman libertine noble and a profligate Jewess princess he expounds the gospel of purity. And upon both, self-condemned by conscience, he presses the fearful fact of a *judgment* to come, which each must meet. Yet this Christian apostle makes no personal charge, utters no personal denunciation. He only leaves the truth to work in the soul. Hence no anger was stirred against Paul in the breast of Felix. The fear awakened in him was wrought not by Paul, but by the Holy Ghost through the truth. The *object* as well as the *cause*, of his dread was the divine law and the divine *Judge* now so vividly disclosed by the apostle. That Felix was alarmed showed that he was not past feeling, nor dead to the appeal of saving truth. In his alarm we see sure evidence of the convincing power of the Holy Ghost, *reproving of sin, or righteousness, and of judgment.*" (Butler.) Felix became alarmed and said, "Go thy way for this time." As some one says, "he sent away the preacher but did not send away the sin." He said also when I have a more convenient season I will call for thee." He meant that some time he would hear more of the matter. A good many people dismiss



their convictions in like manner. He had hoped that Paul would have bribed him to let him go. But Paul would not take a dishonest method of obtaining his freedom which justly was his. We must not take unlawful means to accomplish lawful ends.

In the following year, the city of Caesarea where Paul was kept a prisoner was the scene of one of the frequent and frightful tumults between the Jews and Syrian Greeks A. D. 59. Felix was denounced to the emperor for either ordering or conniving at a massacre of the Jews, and he was recalled to answer for his conduct. Porcius Festus was appointed to take his place. So Paul was left in the custody of Festus.



## CHAPTER XXV.

### A SAINT MAKING HIS DEFENCE.

1 Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Cæsarea to Jerusalem.

2 Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him,

3 And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him.

4 But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Cæsarea, and that he himself would depart shortly *thither*.

5 Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with *me*, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him.

6 And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Cæsarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought.

7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.

8 While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar, have I offended any thing at all.

9 But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?

10 Then said Paul, I stand at Cæsar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.

11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Cæsar.

12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar shalt thou go.

13 And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Cæsarea to salute Festus.

14 And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix:

15 About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed *me*, desiring to *have* judgment against him.

16 To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.

17 Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth.

18 Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed :

19 But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

20 And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked *him* whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters.

21 But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Cæsar.

22 Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.

23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth.

24 And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and *also* here, crying that he ought not to live any longer.

25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.

26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write.

27 For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes *laid* against him.

This is the account of Paul making his second defence, before civil authorities. It was illegal to try a man the second time for the same offense, who had not been found guilty the first time. But what does a carnal church of a wicked world care for justice when they are fighting the truth! In all he was called upon to defend himself four times: first before the mob at Jerusalem (Acts 22); before the Sanhedrin (Acts 23); before Felix (Acts 24) and now before Festus. Lyman Abbott says of Festus,

“The latter does not do full justice to Paul, but, making due allowance for the times and the ordinary course of Roman governors, his course is relatively commendable though not worthy of admiration. The general lesson of these chapters as scarcely noticed by the commentators is the apostolic example of the spirit with which the Christian should meet the false accusation, resisting palpable injustice by meekness without weakness, and dignity without pride or wrath, and making even the wrong-doing of his enemies and those of his Lord, an occasion of preaching the gospel. No words can add to the moral power of the simple contrast of Paul, the Christian prisoner, Festus, the cold and skeptical Roman, and Agrippa, the ambitious, lustful and scornful man of the world.”

The emperor Nero sent Porcius Festus to succeed Felix, about A. D. 60. After he had been in Caesarea, his headquarters, about three days, he went up to Jerusalem to confer with the Jewish authorities. Although two years had intervened the enemies of Paul were just as bitter as ever. They asked Festus if he would not send Paul up to Jerusalem, so they could lay an ambush for him and kill him on the way. But Festus replied that Paul would be kept at Caesarea. Later he gave his reason (See verse 16). He probably would have complied with their request later, if Paul had not appealed to Caesar. (See verse 9.)

He remained in Jerusalem ten days and on his return had Paul brought before him to face his bitter enemies, the Jews, who had again come from Jerusalem to accuse him. They made “many and grievous complaints against Paul but they were the same old charges that had been brought forward, in the trial before Felix. And none of them was proved.

Festus like Felix wanted to do the Jews a favor and he asked Paul if he was willing to go to Jerusalem and face the charges there. This was the very request of the Jews that he had refused. (Vs. 3.) But Paul stood upon his rights as a Roman citizen and refused to go. He declared he ought to be judged as a Roman citizen. So he appealed to Caesar. This settled the question for all parties. It took the case out of the hands of the Jews and Festus too. It relieved Festus of the necessity of holding him to please the Jews. It insured Paul’s life and it gave him the

privilege of paying his expected visit to Rome. He had wanted to go, and now his enemies send him there *without expense to himself*. He had already been tried in a Roman court and could not be sent to the Jewish court without his own consent. Paul knew something about the law. It pays a preacher to know some things besides his profession.

See the nobility of Paul's answer: "I am standing at the judgment seat of Caesar (all Roman emperors were called Caesar) where I ought to be judged," if anywhere. I have wronged none of the Jews. You know better than to think so. If I have wronged any one I do not ask to have my life spared. But if their charges are untrue, I should not be sacrificed to them. This is the spirit and meaning of Paul's reply. He does not propose to be a sacrifice for Festus to offer, to gain favor with the Jews. What courage and dignity Paul showed, as a servant of God, he knew he had the divine protection. As a citizen of Rome he knew he had the protection of the Roman government. So Festus confers with his council and decides to send Paul to Rome: God has a way of making his enemies sometimes pay the traveling expenses of his ambassadors.

About this time Herod Agrippa and Bernice his sister visited Festus. This was Herod Agrippa II. He was only seventeen years of age when his father, Herod Agrippa I, died, and the Roman emperor made his youth an excuse for not giving him the kingdom. The emperor, however, gave him the kingdom of Calchis, vacant by the death of his uncle Herod. He lived in such relations with his sister Bernice as to create great scandal. Festus would naturally tell Agrippa about his perplexing presence, and it was natural that Agrippa should desire to hear Paul. So Paul was led into an assembly of the noblest Jews and Romans, with Agrippa, Bernice and Festus and the governor. Festus made a statement of the facts and then Paul was permitted to speak for himself. "Paul, we remember, had volunteered his defence or story before the Jewish mob in the temple area. He had asserted his pure and truthful life, and affirmed his hope of resurrection, before the whole Sanhedrim. He had made a formal defence against formal charges before Felix; and he had summarily repeated this defence against summary charges

before Festus. Still another, the fifth and last statement he now makes before the Jewish king and high Roman officials. All these addresses and the history out of which they grew, have come to generations of Christian believers in every age and nation. They have helped to enlarge our estimate of the man, and to expound more fully the recorded truths of his grand epistles." (Butler.)

When men begin to persecute others they often get into a predicament themselves. Festus had kept Paul a prisoner for two years and now when he must send him to the emperor at Rome he must send the written charges and he did not know what they were, after keeping a man prisoner for two years. It was quite time to set him at liberty if he had no charges to bring. Festus realized he was in an awkward situation himself.





## CHAPTER XXVI.

### PAUL'S DEFENCE COMPLETED.

1 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself :

2 I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews :

3 Especially *because I know* thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews : wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

4 My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews ;

5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers :

7 Unto which *promise* our twelve tribes, instantly serving *God* day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

8 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead ?

9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem : and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief prests ; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against *them*.

11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled *them* to blaspheme ; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted *them* even unto strange cities.

12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ? *it is hard* for thee to kick against the pricks.

15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord ? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet : for I have appeared unto

thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee ;

17 Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

18 To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision :

20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill *me*.

22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come :

23 That Christ should suffer, *and* that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

24 And as he thus spake for himself Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself ; much learning doth make thee mad.

25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus ; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely : for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him ; for this thing was not done in a corner.

27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets ? I know that thou believest.

28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

29 And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

30 And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them :

31 And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.

32 Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

Paul had been tried since the mob in the temple, by the Sanhedrim, the chief captain, Lysias, Felix, and Festus. Once more he is arraigned. This time he speaks before King Agrippa, and

then the case is completed as far as we have any definite account. He still must be brought before the emperor himself, at Rome. We have no account of *that* trial except that he was tried once, and remanded back to prison (2 Tim. 4:16). Tradition says his second trial resulted in his being beheaded. But God made the vindictiveness of his enemies work for good. So thorough was his examination and by so many different authorities that it made his exoneration complete. More than that, it gave him splendid opportunities to bring the gospel and its claims before people who otherwise would not have heard it. It gave him time to write some of his greatest epistles, which have been more helpful in moulding the theology and religious thought of the church than anything ever written.

He begins his speech before Agrippa, by expressing his satisfaction in being permitted to state his case to one, who knew all about the religion of the Jews and hence would understand the points of difference between him and the Jews. Festus and Felix being Romans could not so well understand these religious differences.

He proceeds to show that as a true Israelite he had been consistent. By his speech we must believe he had been a man of considerable reputation before his conversion for he says, "My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews." Undoubtedly that was true, a scholar of the celebrated Gamaliel, a man of such ability and such a zealous leader in the persecution of Christians must have been well known.

He falls back on his experience. His experience was his excuse for his conduct. And when we remember that God was the prime mover in his experience, wonderfully convicting, gloriously regenerating and filling his soul with Himself, it was sufficient justification of his course. That had been done for his soul which only God could do. He had been brought up a strict Pharisee, believing in and hoping like the other Jews, for the Messiah. And he had found the Messiah in Jesus of Nazareth, whom God had proved to be the Messiah by raising him from the dead. He then asks Agrippa why it should seem incredible for Almighty God to raise the dead. Could he not do it? did he not have the power

to do it? After all, God had done for Israel in the past centuries, is it too much to believe that he could raise Jesus from the dead? When anyone denies that God can save from sin, we can ask nearly the same question, Can not God do it?

He tells of his sincerity in persecuting the saints in Jerusalem. He really thought he ought to do it. His conscience justified him in opposing Christ. He said he gave his voice against the saints. "Literally, *I cast my pebble*, i. e., my vote. In voting in ancient times, small round pebbles were used, the white for acquittal, the black for condemnation. The language here clearly implies that Paul had at that time a position that entitled him to vote in the tribunal before which Christians were brought for trial: and as the Jewish law allowed the infliction of the death sentence only by the Sanhedrim, the conclusion has been generally drawn that he was a member of that court. In that case he was, according to Rabbinical rules, at least thirty years of age at that time." (Abbott.)

He says even worse things than that of himself, "I compelled them to blaspheme." He made them not only give up their hope and faith in Christ but even speak against him and his religion. More than that he was "exceedingly mad against them." Here we have an illustration of depravity working in an unrenewed man who was seeking to be conscientious. While he thought he was doing God's service, pride and ill will were working in his heart to such an extent, that they clouded his judgment. We see here that a man who is exceedingly bitter against the truth is not a hopeless case, for right in the midst of his wicked opposition Jesus struck him with conviction. Similar cases have been known. No doubt the Lord let him go on thus for a time, even to the limit, so that his conversion might not only be marvelous, but might seem to the world to be a marvelous change such as only divine power could accomplish. He even persecuted them to strange cities. He had such a bitterness that he wished not merely to banish Christianity from Jerusalem, but to wipe it off the face of the earth. "Nowhere throughout the sacred annals is the power of divine grace over the sinful heart so fully shown as in his sudden change from a self-righteous, fanatical persecutor of Jesus and Christians to a humble, self-sacrificing servant of

Christ and his church; nor is it easy to see how an honest inquirer can resist a fact so confirmatory of the gospel and the open advocacy of its faith by the most logical, accomplished and determined spirit that ever battled on the side of its enemies." (Bethune.)

So he started on the road to Damascus with a "*commission* from the chief priests" to wipe out the church of Jesus, he left Damascus later with another commission from Jesus, the head of the Christian church, to preach this despised gospel. What a transformation! At mid day when the Syrian sun was shining with its fierce beams upon the hot sands of the desert, he got a sun-stroke from another, more powerful sun—the Sun of Righteousness. A light shone upon him from heaven even brighter than the natural sun. The reader should read Luke's account of this occurrence in connection (Acts 9:1-9) with this account. Paul tells us here some things that Luke did not mention in Chapter 9. Jesus told him he had appeared to commission him to two offices—"A minister (servant) and a witness." In other words he was to be his servant and testify to his experience. How well he did this may be seen in the fact that he always testified wherever he could, especially when on trial for his life. All preachers ought to be witnesses. Testimony to experience is a vanishing quantity in the modern pulpit. No man ought to be allowed to preach who has no experience; nor permitted to preach longer when he has ceased testifying.

Jesus then commissions this man as a "minister and witness" to the Gentiles. His commission included four points. 1. Enlightenment. He was to enlighten the Gentiles. How he did and how well he did it can be seen in his masterly sermons at Lystra (Chapter 14:15-17) and at Athens (Acts 17:22-31). These are models for missionaries to the heathen of today. God intends every preacher shall be an illuminator. If he is faithful in prayer and the use of the Scripture, the Holy Spirit will make him a means of enlightening dark understandings. 2. Conversion. God gives faithful preachers the power to convert men—"turn them from darkness unto light." The Holy Spirit regenerates man converts. We must not be confused at the technical meaning of the word "conversion." We have come to mean by it, that which

comes in the experience of the soul when we say he is "converted." We mean he has become converted, that is he is regenerated and justified. But conversion strictly speaking is to *turn about*. We can turn people by our persuasion, or convert them, so they will seek God for the pardon of their sins and regeneration of their nature. Man converts, God pardons and regenerates. Notice man by nature is in darkness. He is depraved. When he is converted God "translates him out of the kingdom of darkness" into the light of "the kingdom of his dear Son." It is a change as radical as stepping out of darkness into light. We note still further that the unsaved man is under "the power of Satan," before he is brought "to God." The new "liberal" theology, invading some of the pulpits of today, teaches that man has a good part in him, that needs cultivation. He needs only evolution or culture; he is now a child of God. All he needs is to recognize the divine Fatherhood. This is not Paul's scheme of theology. He says Jesus told him to turn men from "the power of Satan." This is the human side of our ministry. Note we have the two divine acts—that they may receive (3) forgiveness of sins. This is for acts committed. God forgives acts, never states of heart. Justification takes away the guilt of our sins, but does not cleanse the heart from the sinfulness. 4. "Inheritance among them that are sanctified." This is parallel to his utterance to the Collosians, whom he says of Jesus, he "hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Comparing the two passages we see that the inheritance here spoken of is heaven. An inheritance is only for heirs. We become heirs by being born of God. But we do not enter into our inheritance until we are fitted for it by being wholly sanctified. Justification or pardon gives us the title and sanctification gives us the fitness. If we refuse to obtain the fitness, by being sanctified, we will lose the title, because of our disobedience.

Notice again that Jesus told him the sanctified, "are sanctified by faith which is in me." There has been false teaching on the method by which we are sanctified. Some assert it is by growth or evolution. But Jesus told Paul that it was by faith—faith in Jesus. *The only passages of Scripture that teach us how we may be sanctified, declare that it is by faith in Jesus.* (See Acts 15:9.)

And yet some professed Christians will risk their fitness for heaven on a theory of growth which has no scriptural authority.

Every true preacher as well is called to this two-fold ministry, that men may receive forgiveness of sins and sanctification by faith. Both justification and sanctification are by faith.

Paul never rebelled at the call. How many have refused the call to preach. But he "was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." He began right away to preach right in Damascus, teaching the Gentiles there, exactly the same doctrine that John the Baptist preached to the Jews: 1. That they should repent, i. e., change their minds in regard to sin. 2. Turn from sin to God. 3. Do works meet for repentance. (See our notes on Acts 2:38.) And so he tells his hearers he had been doing ever since. It was twenty-four years since he began to preach. And these were the causes why the Jews caught him in the temple and sought to kill him, when he had been preaching nothing except what was in accordance with Moses and the prophets.

"He now goes farther and specifies what the truths that he preached were in accordance with that part of the Old Testament called Moses and the Prophets; for Paul was a scriptural preacher. These truths were four. 1. Christ should suffer. 2. He should be the first to rise from the dead. 3. He should show light to the Jews. 4. He should give light to the Gentiles also. These were just the points of doctrine most disagreeable to the Jews. "There was never any one that understood the Old Testament so well as Paul except John the Baptist and John the Divine. He dearly loved Moses and Isaiah, for they, together with King David, were the chief prophets. The words and things of Paul are taken out of Moses and the Prophets." (Luther.)

Festus, a heathen, could have no idea of what Paul had been talking about. But when the latter affirmed the resurrection of the dead, he thought he saw fanaticism and he broke in on the sermon saying, "Paul thou art beside thyself. Much learning doth make thee mad." No doubt he thought these allusions to the Book of Moses and the Prophets indicated that Paul had studied them so much as to turn his brain and believe that the dead could be raised. Paul immediately appealed to King Agrippa as one who knew the current events connected with the history of

Jesus Christ. "King Agrippa believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." He had been referring to the truths which he brought as in accordance with the prophets. Festus thought these truths were fanaticism. So Paul appeals to the king to prove that these truths were in the Book of Moses and the Prophets.

Paul said truly "These things were not done in a corner." The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and spread of the gospel, were all conspicuous facts before the world. No history is so well authenticated. We have a very large number of heathen writers who confirm these accounts—Tacitus, Suetonius, Juvenal, Pliny, Trajan, Adrian and others. "These classic writers compel even those who set no value on the historical Christ to admit his existence; they give a definite starting point to the religion which otherwise might have been declared to have no historical foundation at all, but to be purely and absolutely mythical; they furnish, taken by themselves, no unimportant argument for the truth of the religion, which they prove to have been propagated with such zeal, by persons of pure and holy lives in spite of the punishments and persecutions of the most cruel kind."

Agrippa replied to Paul's appeal, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." This was doubtless said sarcastically, for the word Christian was very unpopular at that time. Some translate it, "In a little measure thou persuadest me to be a Christian," and with Paul's reply the scene ends. The assembly broke up, leaving Paul in bonds, waiting to be carried as prisoner to Rome.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

### HOLY PEOPLE ARE UNDER DIVINE CARE.

1 And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto *one* named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.

2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; *one* Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.

3 And the next *day* we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave *him* liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.

4 And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.

5 And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a city* of Lycia.

6 And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.

7 And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone;

8 And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.

9 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished *them*,

10 And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.

11 Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

12 And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, *and there* to winter; *which is* an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west.

13 And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* purpose, loosing *thence*, they sailed close by Crete.

14 But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.

15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let *her* drive.

16 And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat :

17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship ; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.

18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next *day* they lightened the ship ;

19 And the third *day* we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on *us*, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

21 But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer : for there shall be no loss of *any man's* life among you, but of the ship.

23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,

24 Saying, Fear not, Paul ; thou must be brought before Cæsar : and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer : for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

26 Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.

27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country ;

28 And sounded, and found *it* twenty fathoms : and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found *it* fifteen fathoms.

29 Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.

30 And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship,

31 Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.

32 Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.

33 And while the *day* was coming on, Paul besought *them* all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

34 Wherefore I pray you to take *some* meat : for this is for your health : for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all : and when he had broken *it*, he began to eat.

36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took *some* meat.

37 And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.

38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.

39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.

40 And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed *themselves* unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoised up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.

41 And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.

42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.

43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast *themselves* first into the sea, and get to land:

44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on *broken pieces* of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.

Felix, Festus and Agrippa had heard Paul's story from his own lips and had no condemnation to pronounce. They were more merciful than the apostate church at Jerusalem. As Festus said, "this man might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to Caesar." But he had appealed to Caesar and he must go to Rome and be tried in the imperial court. He had wanted to go to Rome and had promised the church there, that he would visit them some time. But when he did go he went in a different manner from what he expected—a prisoner and like his Lord, numbered with transgressors, for other prisoners also went with them. It is evident that Luke, the writer of the book of Acts, went with them, for he says in verse 7, "when it was determined that *we* should sail into Italy." They sailed from Caesarea north along the coast touching at Sidon and Myra, then they changed ships and took a ship bound for Italy and launched out due west towards Italy. Paul was very kindly treated by Julius, the centurion, who had charge of the guard. They made slow progress for the wind was against them.

Navigation is very difficult in the winter months in the Med-

iterranean Sea. It was about the last of September or the first of October about the time for the autumnal equinoctial storm. We know this because verse 9 says "the fast was already past." He refers here to the fast of expiation (Lev. 16:29) which was held the 10th of the month, Tisri, corresponding nearly with our October.

They had come to a place called Fair Havens on the south coast of the island of Creto. The question on account of the lateness of the season was whether they should spend the winter in this imperfect harbor or try to make Phenice, forty miles distant and a better harbor further west and north on the same island. Paul admonished them not to take any risk (saying the ship would be wrecked, if they did), but remain in the harbor at Fair Havens. But the crew of the ship and the majority of the ship's company wished to go to Phenice for the winter. The wind blew warm and summer like from the south, and supposing it was to be nice weather, they launched out from Fair Havens. But the warm summer like day was what we call a "weather breeder." It was the lull before the storm. Very soon after they set sail a tempestuous wind called Euroclydon set in from the Northeast. Such winds today are called typhoons. They are full of eddys and whirls. Being unable to face it they were compelled to scud before it for twenty-three miles, until they came under the lee of a small island by the name of Clauda. It now became very difficult to haul in and take aboard the small boat towed at the stern. No doubt it was nearly full of winter. In order to keep the timbers of the ship together they undergirded the ship—passed cables around it. These cables were carried on ancient ships for that purpose, to be used in emergency. Then fearing the wind would throw them onto the quick sands on the north coast of Africa, they let down their sails, and so they were driven by the blast, yet a divine hand was guiding, for God had told Paul he should certainly testify of him at Rome (Acts 23: 11). There were not waves enough to sink that ship. God who watches over his children was taking care of Paul. "Not *strake sail*. On the contrary a stern—sail must have been set. Exactly what was lowered is not clear: probably that which was connected with fair weather sails. The

language is nautical and accords with modern nautical phraseology. A ship similarly situated is said now to 'send down' her topmasts, etc. If this ship had *strake* sail and scud before the wind, she would have been driven on the quicksands, which were so much dreaded. What was undoubtedly done was this: under the lee of the island she was brought round, with her head to the gale, facing the north, or a little east of the north, so as to take the storm on her starboard or right quarter. The fair weather sails and spars were taken down, a storm sail was set, and she was then suffered to drift before the storm. In this position navigators calculate they were driven in a direction west by north at the rate of thirty-six miles in twenty-four hours. Thirteen days and a fraction of drifting in this direction and at this rate, would bring her to the island of Malta, and to that part of the island which tradition identifies with the scene of the shipwreck. In this respect therefore modern calculations exactly confirm the Scripture narrative." (Abbott.)

For fourteen days they were thus driven and so tossed about that it was impossible to cook their food. They had cast out the cargo and the tackling of the ship in hopes to save it, and now despair had taken the place of hope. It was at this time that this holy man of God, came to the rescue of their fallen hopes. Now they saw they should have listened to him, and they gladly hear what he has to say. The world today will not heed the warning of the saints of God until it is too late. This company had reason to thank God that Paul and his company were on board. God spares nations and communities because of the presence of his saints among them. There is no good reason why he should keep this world in existence for another day if it were not for the righteous. "Except the Lord of hosts had left us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom." (Isa. 1:9.) These are the salt and light of the world. Holy people are the world's best benefactors.

What a sublime sight it was to see the prisoner encouraging his guards. Some one suggests he might have given them under divine inspiration the warning at Crete against sailing (Vs. 10) so that he could have their confidence and attention to his message in this hour of emergency. He told them to be of good

cheer because he believed God. Our degree of courage in time of disaster will be in proportion to our faith. His encouragement to trust God had a twofold foundation: 1. His consecration to God—"Whose I am and whom I serve." Every one of us will meet our emergency, and dark and trying hour. There is nothing like entire consecration to inspire faith in God. Paul did not know where the ship was—in what part of the Mediterranean but God knew where he was. 2. The communication of the angel. But the angel of the Lord knew where Paul was. This still farther inspired his confidence. He tells them they will all be saved. It was not his opinion but he knew it. God had told him that he should testify in Rome and the same God rules the winds and waves. "Under that dark sky, and in that hopelessly drifting ship there appeared the light of joy and life; for it held no Jonah fleeing from duty, but a Paul bound in spirit to testify for God at Rome also." Paul did not, like Jesus on the Sea of Galilee, still the waves and winds, but he stilled the fears of the others. It is our duty if we have faith to inspire the courage and faith of others.

About midnight the sailors thought they were drawing near to land. Doubtless they began to hear the sound of breakers. They sounded and found it twenty fathoms. Modern soundings find it exactly as the account has it here. Then it grew shallower and so they threw out four anchors from the stern. This shows they were good sailors even in those days. "Ordinarily, anchoring in ancient as in modern navigation, was from the bow; but the ancient ships possessed hawser holes aft; there was therefore, nothing to prevent anchoring from the stern; and there were two reasons for so doing: (1) the fear of swinging round and falling on the rocks leeward; (2) the purpose of running the ship ashore as soon as daylight enabled them to select a place for this purpose. In the naval battle of Copenhagen, the English ships anchored thus from the stern, and it is stated by some writers that Nelson stated after the battle that he had been reading the twenty-seventh chapter of Acts that morning." How anxious they were for the morning light. They "wished for the day," for the danger was great, the shore was very rocky.

The sailors launched the boat, pretending that they were going

to carry the anchors out as far as they were lowered, but really intending to desert the ship. Paul saw into their design and said: "Except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved." He knew the seamen would be needed to manage the ship. Their selfishness would have ruined everything. God would have saved Paul if they had gone, but not necessarily the rest, for God had promised to get Paul to Rome.

Paul then urged them to partake of food. They had not had regular meals for two weeks. They needed strength for the casting out of the cargo (Vs. 32). So he took bread and gave thanks. He did not omit asking the blessing even in this time of dire need. This should teach us the importance of having it a regular habit before our meals. He thus taught these heathen the lesson that we are dependent upon God for our food and ought to show gratitude.

This partaking of food strengthened them for the task of unloading the ship. It also brought good cheer, for physical nature rallies when food is taken, and that has a good deal to do with encouraging the spirits of men. Now the cargo being cast out, the ship was lightened so that it could get near the shore. It must have been a large ship to hold a cargo of wheat and two hundred and sixty people. "From the ship having been pressed so long down on one side, the cargo had shifted so that the ship heeled to that side. To bring her upright, and enable her to be more accurately steered and navigated toward the land at daybreak, it would be useful to throw out as much wheat as time allowed."

So they hoisted a sail when it became light and steered straight for land. The ship ran aground, the fore part struck in the mud and the waves lifting the stern broke the ship in two.

The soldiers wished to kill the prisoners. But the centurion whose favor Paul had gained prevented it. God was still watching over Paul. And so some in one way and some in another they all got ashore unharmed.





## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE PROPHECY OF JESUS AND THE PRAYER OF PAUL FULFILLED.

1 And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.

2 And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid *them* on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

4 And when the barbarians saw the *venomous* beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

7 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.

8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

9 So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:

10 Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded *us* with such things as were necessary.

11 And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

12 And landing at Syracuse, we tarried *there* three days.

13 And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:

14 Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.

15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to

meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns : whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard : but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.

17 And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together : and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men *and* brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let *me* go, because there was no cause of death in me.

19 But when the Jews spake against *it*, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar ; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of.

20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see *you*, and to speak with *you*: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judæa concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee.

22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest : for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.

23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into *his* lodging ; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and *out of* the prophets, from morning till evening.

24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers.

26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand ; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive :

27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed ; lest they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it.

29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,

31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding *him*.

Jesus had prophesied that his disciples should be filled with the Holy Spirit and should receive power to be witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth. (Acts 1:8.) Paul had prayed to be allowed to go to Rome. Both the prophecy and prayer are fulfilled in this chapter. Paul reached Rome as a witness of Jesus Christ.

On coming to shore they found that they were on the island of Melita, now called by the modern name of Malta. Luke calls the inhabitants, "barbarous." This was because they did not speak either the Greek or Latin language, the two great languages of the world. These people were very kind in their hospitality. These people kindled a fire for the ship-wrecked company to dry themselves, as it was raining.

As Paul was gathering sticks to feed the fire a viper came out of the heat and fastened upon his hand. We see here how prone mankind are to form hasty judgments. The barbarians thought that Paul must be a murderer, who had escaped the sea and now the gods had sent this viper to punish him. This was like the experience of Job. His "friends" thought his troubles were sent by God because of his sins. It is very easy to misjudge people, just from appearances. "This is the very bane of all natural religion—the idea of a connection between guilt and retribution. In some form or other it underlies all mythologies. The sleepless never-dying avenger of wrong; the Nemesis, who presides over retribution; the vengeance which suffereth not the murderer to live; the whips and scorpions of the Furies—it seems the first instinct of religion." (Robertson.) When Paul shook the venomous reptile off his hand into the fire, they changed their minds and thought him a serpent charmer, one to be worshipped as a god. Paul not only had supernatural power but he healed the father of the governor of the island, who was sick of fever. As the result the company of Paul were laden with honors. It will be noticed that like all holy people Paul was a blessing, wherever he went; in the storm he was a blessing to the ship's company; on the island a blessing to the "barbarous" people.

They remained on this island three months, and then finding a ship that was bound for Rome, they sailed in it, for Syra-

cuse, eighty miles distant, and then from Syracuse, touching at Rhegium, they kept on their way to Puteoli and landed for good. This was the last of Paul's voyages. Here they found Christian brethren, for the gospel had now spread so far, that nearly everywhere there were believers in Jesus. After tarrying with the brethren evidently with the permission of the centurion, Paul started towards Rome. The journey most of the way was by the famous Appian Way, the oldest and most noted of Roman roads. It was built three hundred years before Christ by the censor Appius Claudius. Upon a foundation of concrete, large blocks of basaltic lava were so closely fitted and cemented that they resembled a rock foundation. Besides the milestones marking the whole distance post stations for relays of horses were established every twenty miles. "Five hundred years after Christ, notwithstanding the traffic of so many ages, the stones were not displaced, nor had they lost their original smoothness."

By waiting at Puteoli, the brethren at Rome had time to hear about Paul's arrival and to come out to meet him, as far as Apii Forum (or the Forum of Appius), a small town, and The Three Taverns, a town ten miles farther.

When Paul saw the brethren, he "thanked God and took courage." He thanked God to see these evidences that the gospel had its converts even in Rome, the home of the emperor, the capital of the world. These brethren were the fruits of the gospel. We are intended for human sympathy and companionship. God said "it is not good for man to be alone." "How can we help being touched by such incidents as these? They set this great hero and champion of the faith before us as a man of like passions as with ourselves. He feels as we should have felt. He is dejected and inspirited by the very causes that tell on us. Like us, he sees all things in 'lines borrowed from the heart.' God is not nearer to him nor more truly with him now he had reached Apii, Forum, or The Three Taverns than he was before; his chains have not been removed; the soldiers still surround and watch him, but he has met attached and pitying friends and his chains grew lighter, and their love deepens the sense of God's love within his soul." (Cox.)

And so he came to Rome, which he had so long desired to

do, but not as he expected. He came as a prisoner, but yet he had the privilege of preaching the gospel, preaching in his own hired house, to his own countrymen for two years. Here he "finished his course with joy" in spite of the fact that he was a prisoner. He believed it was in the will of divine providence and so refusing to be the emperor's prisoner he styled himself "the prisoner of Christ." Amen.











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